



CARE GUIDE



RUSTY RAINFOREST MILLIPEDE

Pachybolidae



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PROFILE

Rusty Rainforest Millipedes originate from the tropical rainforests far north Queensland. Australian rainforest millipedes are some of the most overlooked, yet ecologically important inhabitants of the forest floor. Belonging to the class Diplopoda, these many-legged detritivores play a vital role in breaking down fallen leaves, rotting wood, and other organic matter. As they feed, they fragment this material into smaller pieces, speeding up decomposition and recycling nutrients back into the soil. This process helps maintain the rich, fertile ground that supports rainforest diversity.

Most rainforest millipedes are slow-moving, cylindrical creatures with tough, segmented exoskeletons. Each body segment typically bears two pairs of legs, giving them their “thousand-feet” reputation, even though most species have nowhere near that number. They prefer cool, moist environments and are usually found beneath logs, leaf litter, and rocks, emerging mostly at night to avoid drying out or being eaten.

Unlike centipedes, millipedes do not bite or hunt. Instead, their primary defence is chemical: many species release noxious or staining secretions when threatened, deterring predators such as birds, reptiles, and small mammals. Some rainforest millipedes are beautifully marked in deep browns, glossy blacks, or even bright warning colours.

Despite their modest appearance, millipedes are essential engineers of the rainforest ecosystem. By continually processing decaying plant material, they help sustain the delicate balance of life beneath the canopy, quietly keeping the forest's nutrient cycle turning, one tiny mouthful at a time.

FOOD

This species likes to feed on rotting wood, decaying leaf litter, lichen covered branches and **Minibeast Wildlife's Millipede Substrate** is an ideal food.

This substrate provides those elements as well as shelter as the millipedes like to burrow during the day.

Calcium in the diet seems to be an important factor in raising these millipedes. Providing cuttlebone or chalk for the millipedes to feed on will help provide the calcium they need. **Minibeast Wildlife's Millipede Food** includes calcium, so if using this no additional calcium is required.

WATER

Ensure the substrate remains moist, but not sodden. The millipedes will get their moisture from the damp soil and their food.

ENCLOSURE

An ideal enclosure needs to be around 200mm x 200mm x 200mm. Plastic or glass terrariums are suitable, as are food storage containers but these will require some ventilation holes in the lid. The enclosure should be able to maintain moisture and a high humidity. Place the enclosure in a position away from direct sunlight.

SUBSTRATE

A moist substrate is required for your millipede to shelter and burrow in. As listed in the food section, **Minibeast Wildlife's Millipede Substrate** is perfect for providing their food requirements and a substrate in one single mix.

Other substrates such as coco-peat can be used, but suitable food items such as pulpy wood and rainforest leaf litter should be added to provide the millipedes with their essential requirements.

TEMPERATURE

Safe temperature zone is 15 – 24°C. They will cope well in cooler conditions but may suffer heat stress if kept above 28°C for extended periods.

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain a moist environment for your millipede. Over time the food within the substrate (pulpy wood and decaying leaves) will be consumed and will need to be replaced. It is best not to replace all the substrate at once, but to mix some of the old in with new substrate being added. This retains the helpful bacterial that aid millipede digestion. If any mould or fungi starts to grow in the enclosure, remove if needed, however this is usually not harmful to millipedes and is a normal part of their environment.

HANDLING

These millipedes cannot bite, but are best handled using disposable gloves. They can be picked up gently by their bodies, and carefully placed on the hand. They may release a defensive yellow/brown liquid if they feel threatened. This smells strongly, can stain skin for days, and can sting if it comes in contact with an open wound or sensitive areas such as eyes. Handle with care.

COMMON ISSUES

Stress by over-handling may occur if handled more than once a day. Limit the handling to a period of 10-15 minutes daily.



Around 2-5 years life span



These animals are captive bred, and should not be released into the wild



60 – 90% (which is easily maintained by keeping the substrate moist).

For more information contact us at
info@minibeastwildlife.com.au
0434 998 263