

Care guide

Slender Gumleaf Grasshoppers, *Goniaea vocans*



Slender Gumleaf Grasshoppers are found throughout Australia within open eucalypt woodlands. As their name suggests, they look very much like dried gum leaves. They vary considerably in colour and pattern as juveniles, ranging from browns through various shades of grey, often with speckled patterns. As adults, they are usually less pattern and a more uniform colour. This can still vary from brown to mimicking the colours of the dry eucalypt leaves in their habitat. They feed on eucalyptus leaves, usually on live or fresh leaves, but will also chew upon dead leaves.

They spend the daylight hours sitting within foliage and will often bask in the sun to warm up. Nymphs will jump if disturbed, however adults have the ability to fly to escape danger.

Smaller males seek out females in order to mate, and cling to the females back while copulating. Once fertilised, females will lay masses of eggs in the ground surrounded by protective foam. The tip of the female's abdomen is equipped with small digging tools which enable her to drive her abdomen deep into the soil to lay eggs in a safe moist position.

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Food: Fresh gum leaves (best offered as a small branch with the stem in a water container to keep them fresh). Some dry (brown/crispy) leaves can also be added. They will also feed on Minibeast Wildlife's Orthopteran Food or Grasshopper Food. (If using a water container to keep leaves fresh, ensure it is covered so that grasshoppers cannot fall in and drown).

Water: Mist spray the enclosure once a day. This will keep the enclosure damp and the humidity high. The grasshoppers will drink from the moisture on the foliage and branches.

Enclosure: The ideal enclosure should favour height over length and needs to be about 30 cm H x 30 cm W x 30 cm L. It should be well ventilated and escape proof. The base of the enclosure may be kept bare/clean or covered in dry leaf litter. A substrate is not important unless breeding is intended. In this case a sand or coco-peat a depth of 5 – 10cm would be ideal. A small container of such substrate can be included for egg deposition instead of covering the whole floor with substrate.

Temperature: This species requires warm conditions (mid 20's) and does best if given a range of temperatures throughout the enclosure. The provision of a basking (heat) lamp at one end of the enclosure is appreciated by this species.

Life span: About 1-1.5 years.

Handling: This species can be handled but are a little unpredictable and may jump without warning.

Reproduction: This species can be housed in groups, so once mature mating will occur between pairs. Females will poke their abdomens down into the substrate and deposit eggs into suitable sites. Hatching may take several months depending on substrate temperatures (mid 20's are ideal). The hatchling grasshoppers will shed their exoskeletons as they emerge from the ground and will begin to feed on the same food as the adults within 24 hours.

Common issues: If keeping these grasshoppers in groups, ensure that there is sufficient space for individuals to perch, feed and moult without interrupting each other. Moulting mishaps (deformities) may occur in cases of over crowding.

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

For more information contact Minibeast Wildlife at info@minibeastwildlife.com.au