

Caring for your new pet Hermit crab.

Coenobita clypeatus

Hermit crabs are fun little friends.



Easy step by step set up. (For more information see [Hermit crab care](#))

1. Find a place out of direct sunlight and drafts to set up your new hermit crab habitat.
2. Rinse/wipe down the entire tank (inside and out), feed/watering containers and all decorations with clean water (NO, soaps, detergents or other cleaning materials).
3. **If using an under tank heater, attach to bottom of tank before adding substrate.**
4. Place substrate in bottom of the tank.
5. Add all other decorations remembering that hermit crabs like to climb too.
6. Find a place to add the food and water containers (TIP: choose a place that you can observe them eating and gives you good access for maintenance).
7. Mist lightly, 1-3 sprays from a spray bottle.
8. Add your new pet hermit crab.
9. Place the top cover on securely.
10. Sit back and enjoy.



About your hermit crab.

Despite their name, they actually like to live in communities and are great pets to observe and care for. Keeping 2-4 hermit crabs together will reduce stress to the animal(s), improve their health and allow them to be social. Sometimes you can hear them “clicking” to each other.

In the wild, hermit crabs can be found in a variety of habitats ranging from inland forests to warm sandy beaches, ranging from Florida to Venezuela and the Caribbean islands. They seldom fight except on occasion over a shell dispute.

Like many other creatures, they respond to gentle care and learn to trust their keeper. In the wild, land hermit crabs may live 30 years or more, no one really knows for sure. In captivity, 10-15 years have been reported, though 1-4 is average.

The following information will help you create a happy and healthy home for your hermit crab.

Hermit crab care.

Choosing a home for your crab

A leaky old aquarium is often a great first home for hermit crabs. A 10-gallon tank can comfortably fit 15 crabs. Your crab aquarium (crabarium) must be equipped with a lid. Hermit crabs may be slow, but they love to climb and are master escape artists. You can purchase terrariums with matching lids or make one yourself out of screening or Plexiglas; either way it is important that the lid allows for adequate ventilation. Place your crabarium out of direct sunlight but where you will be able to appreciate your pets throughout the day.

Crab Climate



In the wild hermit crabs live in a tropical environment, therefore tank temperature should be maintained between 65 and 85 °F. If you live in a cold climate, you may achieve this by using an overhead heat lamp. Set your heat lamp to a timer so that it will turn on during the day and off at night. For more consistent heating you can purchase a heater that works like an electric blanket attached to the base (underside) of your aquarium.

Hermit crabs require relatively high humidity. They do not like a wet sloppy home, just a humid one. Be sure to have a lid for your crab's aquarium that allows for some ventilation but still maintains the heat and humidity in the tank. A piece of plexi-glass with several 1/4 inch holes drilled in it is sufficient for a 10 gallon aquarium. Small, ready-to-use crabariums are available at most pet stores.

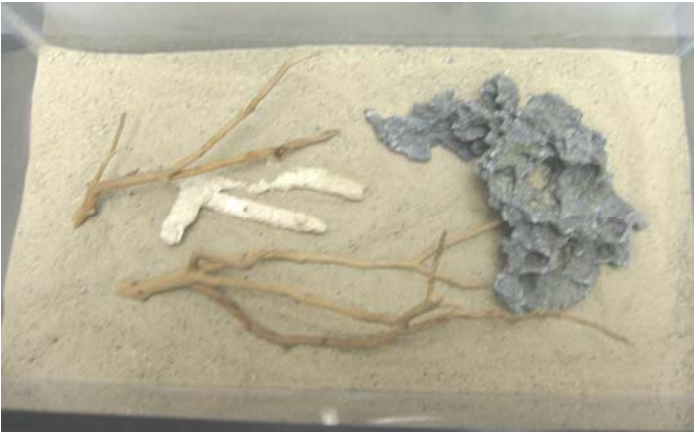
Adding substrate



Land hermit crabs actively burrow in their substrate. 'Sandbox' sand, small aquarium gravel or fine river pebbles are all suitable substrate for the bottom of your hermit crab tank. Core dust (processed coconut husks) is also an excellent substrate which can be mixed into a sand substrate. Fill the bottom two inches of the tank with clean substrate, or just deep enough so that your biggest crab can fully burrow in it.

Corncob, pine or cedar shavings have a tendency to dry out the crabs and can become toxic.

Décor



Add decorations to your crab's tank like "non-resinous" dry wood branches, rocks or coral pieces. Land hermit crabs will actively climb on twigs, branches and anything else in their environment. Be sure to clean thoroughly before adding to your hermit crabs environment.

Hermit Crab Food



Good nutrition is the key to keeping your Hermit crab happy and healthy. HBH Hermit Crab Variety Bites is a complete, well-balanced diet that will promote your crab's health. Hermit crabs eat very little food, very slowly. Offer your crab fresh food daily in a low flat dish. Always clean out the dish daily even if it looks like your crab might not have eaten from it. In the wild their diet consists of leaf litter, fruits and vegetation. You can also feed your Hermit crab HBH Hermit Crab Cookies for a special treat! To add more variety to their diet you can try feeding them wheat bread, tortilla chips, romaine lettuce, coconut, apple, bananas or many other fruits.



Water/misting/bathing



Choose a water bowl, a relatively wide flat non-metal container, something that your crab can wade through and bathe in but not so deep that it can drown. Fill the bowl with water and then spray it a couple times with HBH Safe Soak and Spray to dechlorinate the tap water, making it safe for your crab to drink. Place a natural sponge in the water dish to reduce evaporation and drowning.

Mist your crabs daily (1-3 sprays from a mist bottle) with water treated with HBH Safe Soak and Spray to help maintain humidity.

Bathe your hermit crabs once a week. Place your hermit crab in a shallow (remember they can drown) container of luke warm water, dechlorinating the water with HBH Safe Soak and Spray first. Distilled and spring water can be used as well. Allow your crab to move around to dislodge food particles, substrate and any other debris, change the water a couple of times during bathing and let drip dry or place on a towel, briefly, before placing back in the enclosure. Hermit crabs are quite active after and during the bathing process and can be very amusing to observe.



Salt

Your hermit crab needs salt to grow and molt. In addition to a fresh water bowl, add a shallow salt bath to your hermit crab tank so that the crabs can bathe and absorb necessary salts and minerals. HBH Hermit crab salt provides extra calcium which strengthens the exoskeleton.

Molting/Shells



Your crabs grow by sloughing off their outer skin (exoskeleton). For small crabs, this is the most important part of growth. During this time, they slough off all of their skin (it looks like an empty skeleton of the crab). They need to be kept extra moist and in a substrate that they can burrow themselves into. It is a good idea to isolate the molting crab for a couple of days because they are very soft, vulnerable and inactive. However, this is an important stage of development, any missing appendages will be regenerated. Older crabs molt less frequently but require the same care. As your hermit crabs grow, they will need new shells to grow into. They seem to enjoy moving in and out of empty shells to select the home that feels best, so provide a good assortment of the appropriate size shells. When introducing a new group of shells, your crabs should immediately begin to shop for a new home. This behavior can be quite comical to observe. Your local pet shop should have a great assortment of shells.

- ❖ **NEVER** attempt to remove a crab from its shell. Land hermit crabs will allow themselves to be injured rather than give up its protective shell.