

# Hermit Crab

## A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

### Habitat Setup and Maintenance

The terrarium should mimic the crab's natural habitat as much as possible. Cover the bottom of the terrarium with sand (children's play sand, which like beach sand has rounded grains, works best) or a sand/humus mixture. If the sand is 8 cm or more deep, the hermit crabs can burrow, which they like to do, especially before molting. *Lightly* moisten the sand to provide the humidity that the crabs require. Add a shallow bowl of water, and branches, rocks, or other items as desired. (Avoid using metal objects.) There should be a hiding place for each crab. Use a ventilated top.

Keep hermit crabs at 21 to 27° C (70 to 80° F) with 70 to 90% humidity. Change the water in the bowl often, using conditioned tap water or bottled water. (See General Guidelines for information on conditioning tap water.) Keep water less than 2 cm deep so the crabs will not drown. Hermit crabs keep a small amount of water in their shells so their gills will remain moist, so access to water is critical. If you don't keep a bowl of water in their habitat, remove the crab from the habitat once or twice a week and place it in a bowl of room-temperature conditioned water. Mist the terrarium daily, increasing ventilation if mold appears.

Hermit crabs are omnivores and will eat almost anything. Feed hermit crab food, fruits and vegetables, dry pet food, etc. Avoid meats and fat, which can foul the terrarium. Clean the terrarium often, but avoid soaps.

### FAQ's

*How many hermit crabs should I keep in a terrarium?*

A 10-gallon tank/terrarium can hold 2 small to medium hermit crabs. Keep crabs of similar size together, as the larger one may bully or even eat the smaller one.

*How long will my hermit crabs live?*

The ages of your hermit crabs are unknown; they will probably live for several months. Given adequate space, food, and clean water, they could even live for years.

*What can I do to ensure that my hermit crabs live for a long time?*

Keep their habitat humid. We suggest both a thermometer and a humidity gauge in the terrarium. Watch for mold, clean the terrarium regularly, and keep food and water fresh.

*Why aren't my hermit crabs moving?*

Check the temperature in the terrarium. The crabs will become inactive if they are too cold. Also, hermit crabs are nocturnal animals and are most active at night, when they can be noisy.

*Will my hermit crab grow?*

The crab will, but its shell will not. It's a good practice to keep several shells of various sizes in the terrarium for the crab to move into. Sometimes hermit crabs will reject the shells if they have cracks or holes. This could be because the crab keeps a small amount of water in its shell to keep its gills moist, and if it leaks, the crab could die. Crabs may also reject shells that contain sand or other materials.

*My hermit crab came out of its shell and won't go back in. What do I do?*

This is often a sign of stress; try to determine what is causing it. One common cause is high temperatures.

Have you been using a heat lamp? Is the terrarium in direct sunlight? Look for unsanitary conditions and check the shell to see if it has cracked. Also, remove any metal objects. Place the crab and its shell in a clean, soap-free glass, bowl, or cup that is just large enough to contain crab and shell. In such close proximity, the crab will probably re-enter its shell. If not, give it a slightly larger shell.

**Problems?** We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

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