

# Millipedes

## A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

Millipedes are among the easiest animals to keep in a classroom. Once established in a terrarium, they only require an occasional check for moisture and food.

### Immediate Care and Handling

Open the shipping container and remove the cup of sphagnum moss that contains the millipedes. Your millipedes respond negatively to light and are probably burrowed deep into the sphagnum and not visible. They are inoffensive creatures, but when disturbed they may secrete a liquid that some people find irritating to the skin. Wear plastic or latex gloves when handling them and avoid touching your eyes or mouth. Wash your hands after handling. Open the cup and empty its contents onto a tray or paper towel. Spread out the sphagnum and examine the millipedes. Some may begin crawling while others curl up. Once you have confirmed that they are in good condition, transfer them into a holding container or terrarium.

### Habitat Setup

Millipedes require little space. Three millipedes can be housed in our Plastic Aquarium/Terrarium (item [#670388](#)), which has a floor area of  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$ " ( $13 \times 28.5$  cm). Place about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2" (4 to 5 cm) of moist potting soil or woodland soil mix into the tank or container. Cover the surface of the soil with leaf litter. If you want the terrarium to be decorative, add rocks, sticks, moss, or other plants and then the millipedes. Place the cover on the terrarium to conserve moisture and prevent escape.

### Maintenance

Position the terrarium away from the sunlight. The millipedes will eat the leaf litter. Supplement at least weekly with a slice of raw potato or apple. You can offer them other fruits and vegetables, as well. Add a few fish food flakes from time to time for protein. Remove any dried-out or moldy food. Check the soil 2 to 3 times per week for moisture. Once in a great while it will be necessary to disassemble the terrarium, clean it, and replace the potting soil.

### FAQs

***Our millipedes disappeared. Where are they?***

Millipedes avoid light. They are probably under some leaf litter, or they have burrowed into the soil in the terrarium. You are more likely to observe the millipedes if you keep the terrarium in a dimly lit area.

***How do I keep my millipedes healthy?***

Millipedes need humidity, so regularly spray the habitat with room temperature conditioned water. Chitin is essential to millipedes for molting and growing a new exoskeleton. Oak leaves are rich sources of this nutrient: Be sure to add leaf litter to the habitat. Don't be too fussy about keeping their terrarium clean, as millipedes thrive under somewhat unkempt conditions.

***Our millipedes have tiny bugs on them. What are they?***

They are probably mites, which are symbiotic with the millipedes and do not harm them. It is not necessary to remove the mites unless there is a heavy infestation. Here are 2 methods (there will be mites in the habitat, so after cleaning the millipedes, you may have to start over with a fresh habitat).

- While gently holding the millipede with the thumb and fingers of 1 hand, spray it with room temperature, dechlorinated water. This should remove most of the mites.
- Another method is to place 2 to 3 tablespoons of flour in a plastic bag and add a millipede. With the bag closed, gently shake to cover the millipede with flour. Most of the mites will drop off. Remove the millipede and blow off as much of the flour as possible. Return the millipede to its habitat. Dispose of the bag and flour.

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

**Orders and replacements:** 1-800-334-5551, then select Customer Service.

**Technical Support and Questions:** [caresheets@carolina.com](mailto:caresheets@carolina.com)



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