



HERMIT CRABS

HOUSING

Hermit Crabs are great escape artists; therefore keep them in a suitable container such as a glass aquarium or fish bowl etc. Shell grit should be used on the bottom of the container and should be changed with fresh shells approximately once a week depending on the amount of crabs and the size of the house. Coral or driftwood makes good climbing articles for your crabs.

FEEDING

Hermit Crabs will eat a wide variety of foods. Pet City Crab Chow makes a good food base. This should be supplemented with Pet City Protein Crab Food. Their diet can also include fresh vegetables like lettuce, apple etc but don't forget to remove food before it becomes soiled. Hermit Crabs only eat about a match head of food per day; so don't panic if you do not see the crab eat very much. Feeding will usually occur at night.

WATER

Hermit Crabs live on land, but do require fresh water to drink daily. A shallow dish is best as this allows the crabs to grip the bowl and crawl out of the water. They can drown if they cannot get out. Hermit Crabs enjoy bathing and will spend a lot of time in and around the water bowl.

SALT BATHS

Hermit Crabs are born in the ocean and therefore must replace the amounts of salt in their bodies. Once a week, mix 1 level teaspoon of Pet City Salt Bath Crystal to cup of water. Stir until dissolved and then place into a dish and into the crab's enclosure. Let the crabs bathe as they wish. Remove the salt bath after a day. They will not drink the salt water, but it will be absorbed through their external skeleton.

SHELLS

Hermit Crabs are soft-bodied creatures, which have no shell of their own. As they grow they must find a discarded shell as protection from predators. When your crab needs a new shell (it will not fit the shell properly when withdrawn into it) the time has come to offer it a selection of new homes. Choose shells that are a little larger than the present one. Leave the crab to do its thing. When the crab finds a shell that is suitable, it will check it out and move

straight in. It is all over in a few minutes and the old shell is left behind. Male crabs are a darkish red and females are a greyish colour. Both male and female like company so have 2 or more in a cage.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Hermit Crabs are communal animals. They enjoy the company of other crabs.
2. Hermit Crabs must be kept warm. Place the house near a window or another sunny spot. This will keep the crabs warm and active during the day, then the crab will burrow into the warm shell grit during the night.
3. Keep the crab house clear of uneaten food etc.
4. DON'T pull the crab out of its shell – IT WILL DIE.
5. Be careful not to drop your crab.
6. DON'T leave the crab outside unattended. Dogs and cats eat them.

HABITS

The land hermit crab is somewhat nocturnal by nature and will sleep during most of the day. Low temperature and low humidity also sends it into its shell. Warm humid air and the warmth of your hand are usually sufficient to wake it up. These crabs are long lived and if well cared for will live for several decades. During this time they will become so friendly you will consider them one of your family.

HEAT

The land hermit crab is tropical and is best kept at about 30C. Do not let the temperature drop below 20C. Installing a low wattage globe over the top of the aquarium can provide heating. Make sure a thermometer is used to monitor temperature.

This is just a basic guide. To find out more about your pet, ask Pet City about suitable books.

