



komodo®

CARE GUIDE



Millipedes

Congratulations on purchasing the Komodo Basic Millipede Kit. Millipedes make fascinating and unusual pets that can provide much interest and pleasure, particularly for children.

Quick Millipede Facts

- Adult size is about 20 to 25 cm (8 to 10 inches) long.
- In general, giant millipedes have an expected lifespan of about 7-10 years.
- They have two main modes of defence if they feel threatened: they curl into a tight spiral, and they secrete an irritating liquid from pores on their body.
- They can be handled, and are quite docile and slow moving.
- They get along fine with others so you can keep several together in this habitat.
- Millipedes do not actually have a thousand legs - they usually have around 200-250 (2 sets of legs per body segment). Each time they moult, they add more segments and therefore more legs.

Feeding

Millipedes are peaceful vegetarians. It is worth trying numerous different types of food to see what your millipede likes best. Softer vegetables and fruits are best - try leaf lettuce, cucumber (usually a big favorite), tomatoes, melon, peaches, bananas, etc. The food can be placed in a shallow dish and should be sprinkled regularly with Komodo Calcium Powder for Herbivores to provide an essential source of calcium. They prefer food that is starting to decay so leaving it for a day or so is not a problem.

Décor

Millipedes spend most of their time hiding in the humid (but not soaking wet) substrate. The addition of some cork bark and an artificial plant will provide cage enrichment and an opportunity for some climbing.

Handling

Millipedes are usually safe when handled gently. When you have earned their trust by being very still, they will usually uncurl and start to crawl about. Never hold an animal close to anyone's face. When frightened they can spurt an unpleasant fluid. This liquid can be harmful if it gets into your eyes or mouth. As with other animals, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after handling.

Health

Millipedes appear to suffer from few ailments in captivity provided that their husbandry needs are properly met. Many millipedes are found to have mites moving about on them. These are totally harmless, and live in a symbiotic relationship with the millipede; they clean up bits of discarded or rotting foodstuffs and waste in the terrarium, but do not harm the millipedes, just as the millipedes do not harm them. If the population becomes too much it is possible to remove them. The best method to remove mites from millipedes is to use a cotton bud dipped in warm water.

Heating

All of the giant millipede species come from the tropical and sub-tropical parts of the world, so they might need some supplementary heating within a normal house. This is best provided by using a suitable heat mat. This should be placed upright on the back wall outside the tank. If placed underneath, the heat mat tends to dry the substrate out too quickly, hence the location recommended. By providing this gradient millipedes will find a position which makes them feel most comfortable.

Humidity

The humidity level should also be kept quite high, and this can be achieved by keeping the substrate damp (not wet) with regular misting, using a Critter's Choice Spray Bottle.

Lighting

Ambient light is sufficient for these nocturnal creatures who generally avoid bright light and excessive heat.

Water

Although millipedes will gain much of the moisture that they need from their food, they will still drink from a water bowl. This should be shallow so that there is no danger of drowning and should be kept fresh at all times.

Quick Setup Guide:

1. Check that all the parts are present and remove the packaging from the Habitat.
2. Decide on a suitable place for the Habitat to be situated. Ensure it is away from drafts and cannot be overheated from direct sunlight through a window.
3. Position the heat mat in the appropriate place on the outside of the habitat in accordance with the instructions given above and with the dedicated heat mat instructions.
4. Empty the substrate into the habitat. Mist the substrate if required
5. Position the thermometer/humidity gauge in a suitable place, preferably near the heat mat so that you can monitor and prevent the habitat from overheating.
6. Place the filled water bowl into the habitat using bottled water if possible.
7. Carefully place your new Millipede into the habitat and ensure the top is on securely.

Extra shopping list:

- Komodo Spray bottle**
- Komodo Calcium with Extra D3**
- Komodo Habitat Bark**
- Komodo Woodland Moss**

For further information we recommend a good book such as *Your First Millipede* or contacting the *Amateur Entomological Society* @ www.amentsoc.org



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