

Praying Mantis Egg Cases

Genus: *Tenodera*
Family: Mantidae
Order: Dictyoptera
Class: Insecta
Phylum: Arthropoda
Kingdom: Animalia



Conditions for Customer Ownership

We hold permits allowing us to transport these organisms. To access permit conditions, [click here](#).

Never purchase living specimens without having a disposition strategy in place.

There are currently no USDA permits required for this organism. We do not recommend release into the wild because of the potential unforeseen effects to the environment and other native species.

Primary Hazard Considerations

Wash your hands thoroughly after handling the praying mantis egg cases or the praying mantis. Praying mantises can jump unexpectedly. They can also bite, although they are not harmful to humans.

Availability

Praying mantises are available year round. They are collected in the wild all over North America starting late November and continuing through April. The cases are kept in cold storage for use during the off-season, May through October.

Arrival Care

Praying mantis egg cases will arrive in a plastic vial. They could emerge immediately but are expected to take about 4–6 weeks to hatch. The length of time that it takes the egg case to hatch is also dependent on the age of the egg case at the time of collection. The egg cases may be kept in the refrigerator for a short period of time to delay hatching.

Captive Care

Habitat:

- To hatch, place the egg mass in a netted enclosure or in an [Aquarium 21 W 5240](#) covered with insect netting or fine cheesecloth. You can place moist soil in the bottom of the enclosure to increase the humidity. Incubation should be at normal room temperature. Soon after the mantises hatch, you will need to transfer them to small individual containers.

Care:

- Approximately 150–180 young mantises can emerge from each egg case, but you can expect only about five to survive. Provide the mantises with food and water immediately after they hatch. Any flightless [Fruit Flies 87 W 6652](#) are an excellent food source for the mantises. The newly hatched mantises might not start eating right away, but they will need the water immediately. Provide water by misting the mantises and putting a wet cotton ball in a shallow dish. Following emergence, keep the mantises away from direct sunlight, maintain a humid atmosphere and continue to mist them frequently. After a couple of days, transfer the surviving mantises to individual containers to prevent cannibalism. You can place a newly hatched praying mantis in a small container and then increase the container size as the mantis grows. Small containers are also appropriate for short-term care, regardless of size. As they grow, you can offer a more varied diet. If you have access to aphids, you can feed them to your praying mantises as well. Generally, they will eat most insects.

Information

- **Identification:** The front legs of the praying mantis are bent and held together at an angle that reminds observers of a prayer; this is where they get their name. Praying mantises can be brown, pale green, cream, or pink in color and have compound eyes.
- **Method of reproduction:** Praying mantises reproduce sexually. The mating season in temperate climates typically begins in September. Some praying mantises engage in a courtship ritual. The male leaps onto the female's back and clasps her thorax and wing bases with his forelegs. He then arches his abdomen to deposit and store sperm in a chamber near the tip of the female's abdomen. The female will sometimes cannibalize the male either during or after mating. The female praying mantis lays up to 400 eggs which are deposited in a frothy mass that is produced by glands in her abdomen. This froth hardens and creates a protective capsule with a further protective coat.
- **Determining sex:** The males of most species of praying mantises are fully winged while many females have either reduced wings or no wings at all. The nymphs of praying mantises look like small adults but lack wings or have developing wing buds.

Life Cycle

The egg mass, usually laid in the fall, is called an ootheca. Nymphs hatch in the spring and resemble small wingless adults. They molt five to ten times before reaching maturity. The natural lifespan of a praying mantis in the wild is about 10–12 months.

Wild Habitat

Praying mantises are found worldwide in temperate and tropical regions. They are frequently seen in meadows and gardens on tall herbs, flower clusters, and shrubs.

Disposition

- We do not recommend releasing any laboratory animal into the wild.
- Adoption is the preferred disposition for any living animal.
- If the insects must be euthanized at the end of study, put them into a container or bag and freeze for 48 hours.
- A deceased specimen should be disposed of as soon as possible. Consult your school's recommended procedures for disposal. In general, dead insects should be handled as little as possible or with gloves, wrapped in an opaque plastic bag that is sealed (tied tightly) before being placed in a general garbage container away from students.