

HERMIT CRAB CARE SHEET

For more than 40 years, hermit crabs have been part of our lives. We are lucky enough to still have two of our hermit crabs for 25 years. Many crabs sadly do not make it that long, but with proper care they can live long happy lives. Things A Drift only carries Purple Pincers, a hardy species of hermit crab that originates from the Caribbean. They enjoy humid weather, but can comfortably live in your home once they get used to you. The crabs we had as our own pets grew to softball size and lived comfortably outside of a cage, walking around the house. Always keep in mind that we do not sell souvenirs, we make friends. These are not temporary pets, they are a responsibility like any other animal. If you ever have any hermit crab emergencies, please do not hesitate to call us at 609-361-1668 (please do not wait for an email as crab health is time sensitive). Below is a simple guide to help any crab owner, whether new or expert, better take care of their friend.

Feeding

Hermit crabs like the food we eat, not those pellets from pet stores. The pellets contain a chemical preservative that may be harmful to crabs. A hermit crab will only eat a pea-sized amount of food per sitting, and almost exclusively while you are sleeping, so you may not notice a difference in the food. They live cooked chicken off the bone, beef, eggs and egg shells, cheese, dry dog or cat food, vegetables, fruit and pizza. Yes, pizza. They eat the cheese and love the tomato sauce. Place food and fresh water in the crabs enclosure around 7pm at night and remove any left over food by morning. Feed them every other day; daily if you have many crabs.

Water

Only use bottled water for hermit crabs. Tap water may contain chemicals that are not safe for crabs.

Shells

Please only use natural shells for you hermit crab. Painted shells may look fun but the paint is toxic to both the crabs and you. It contains lead. We only carry natural shells.

Friends

Hermit crabs live in large groups in the wild, so they need a friend. It's best to bring home two crabs so they have a companion. They have been known to befriend dogs when no other crabs are around. If they get too lonely, the stress can kill them.

Age

Crabs in captivity can live up to 30 years with proper care.

Molting

Crabs will molt about once a year in the Spring and Summer. Sometimes smaller crabs can molt more often. During this time they will become sluggish and seem dead. **DO NOT THROW THEM AWAY!** Unless you start smelling a putrid odor, they are probably molting. During this time leave them water but do not handle them. It may be necessary to separate other crabs from them at this time. The entire process of molting can take up to a month. The exoskeleton will come off and look like a dead crab. Leave the exoskeleton, the crab needs to eat it to regain lost minerals. Once he comes active again he will still be a little pink and soft, do not handle him. Crabs need time to let their exoskeleton harden completely.

Illness or Stress

We recommend calling (609-361-1668) us immediately if your crab isn't acting it's usual self, even if you bought them at a different shop.

Temperature & Humidity

Keep temperatures in your home or the crab's enclosure at between 75-80 degrees. Humidity should be high around 80%. Purple pincers can survive at lower temperatures and humidity if they have to. The most important thing is getting them acclimated to their new home. Humidity helps keeps their gills moist so they can breathe.

Enclosures

Purple pincers do well in a cage, however ours were allowed to be free range. They enjoy exploring, so do don't be afraid to let them out in your bedroom. Best to do this while under your supervision and in a room you can close the door. Fresh water should always be available to your crab. Do not use gravel or calci-sand in the plastic tank that often comes with crabs. They do not like to walk on that and can't dig down into it.

This usually goes without saying, but please clean you cages daily with soap and water and thoroughly once a month. Remove the crabs and wash with Clorox bleach, then rinse. Set cage out in sun for about three hours. Place cage back indoors and let cool down before returning crabs to it. Water dishes can be washed with soap and water every couple of days, especially if you notice crab feces in the water. Again, ALL FOOD should be removed from the cage after the one night it is fed to the crab.

Handling & Play

Hermit crabs, particularly purple pincers, are not meant to be "background pets" to be ignored. They can be handled with care and can even be trained a little. Pinching will only occur if you cup your hand around them and do not handle them appropriately. Flatten your palm completely, then, holding the shell of the crab, place it gently on your hand. It will tickle once it starts crawling. Once the crab has been handled, it will become more comfortable with you and the chance of pinching greatly reduced. Building a Lego castle for them to crawl on or letting them play in a dollhouse is a great form of enrichment.

Transport

Always remove your crabs from their enclosure before moving them or placing them in a car for travel. Place the crabs in an insulated lunch bag or foam cooler. Never leave crabs unattended in a car, especially on a hot day. Our personal crabs have traveled with us across the country and have been to nearly every state!