



Giant Millipedes

(Scientific Names:

Archispirostreptus gigas – African Millipede

Orthoporus – many species in this genus are known as Desert Millipedes)



Introduction:

Giant Millipedes are docile, fairly large millipedes that come from areas as diverse as North America and Africa. Depending on its origin, a Giant Millipede can range in color from dark brown to bright orange, or from glossy tan to yellow and black stripes! Millipedes frequently come out during the summer, and in some areas, they can be collected by the hundreds after heavy rains. Giant Millipedes are relatively easy to keep alive in captivity and make an interesting addition to any millipede collection, simply because they are large and come in many different colors.

Size:

Up to 11 inches

Feeding:

In the wild, millipedes are detritivores (they feed on dead and decaying material). In captivity, they seem to do best on kale, romaine lettuce, bananas, apples, cucumbers and other softer fruits and vegetables. They also need calcium powder, which can be purchased from most pet stores and sprinkled over their food.

Housing:

Babies can live in a roomy, clear plastic container with air holes. Several individuals can live together in a 5-gallon aquarium; make sure the tank is at least twice as wide as the length of the largest individual. Include overturned pieces of bark to create shallow caves for sleeping.



Substrate:

Lay down a mixture of peat moss or potting soil 3-5 inches deep and keep it moist. Giant Millipedes are natural burrowers and spend very little time on the surface.

Heating:

Giant Millipedes do well at room temperature. No additional heating is required.

Water/Humidity:

Mist the substrate with clean water daily—the ground should be damp, but not wet. Also provide a very shallow bowl of drinking water and clean it regularly.

Myths vs. Facts

- ❖ **Myth:** Millipedes have a thousand legs.
- ❖ **Fact:** This myth comes from their name—*milli* means 1,000 in Latin. The actual number of legs can be between 100 and 400 depending on the age and type of millipede. Each time a millipede molts it adds additional segments and legs.

- ❖ **Myth:** Millipedes are venomous
- ❖ **Fact:** Unlike many species of centipedes, millipedes do not have a venomous bite or sting. However, they can release an irritating liquid that contains hydrochloric acid and may be harmful if it is ingested or gets in your eyes. Always wash your hands after handling a millipede.

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