



## Scorpions

(Scientific Name: The order *Scorpionida* contains many species of scorpions.)



### Introduction:

There are around 1,500 known species of scorpion. They can be found in many different types of environments around the world, from tropical jungles to arid deserts to high and cold northern mountains. They are found on every continent except Antarctica! All have large claws on two front legs and a venomous sting at the end of their tails. The effects of this venom on humans range from pain similar to a wasp sting to agonizing pain and possibly death. Only about 20 species of scorpion worldwide have venom that can kill a human, but if you plan to keep scorpions, be sure to do your research and avoid the very dangerous species! The most popular species of pet scorpion is the Emperor Scorpion (*Pandinus imperator*), which is quite large but also reluctant to strike unless frightened or angered, making it relatively easy to care for.

### Size:

Depending on the species, scorpions can grow up to 6 inches.

### Feeding:

Scorpions are not picky eaters and will eat many of the live insects provided for them. They enjoy crickets, locusts, meal worms, silkworms, superworms and cockroaches. Feed your scorpion daily, but only provide as many insects as it can eat in one meal—typically just one.

### Housing:

A 5-gallon aquarium with a tight-fitting (or locking) lid is adequate for housing a single scorpion. Provide a 10-gallon tank for two scorpions or for a desert scorpion, which will appreciate more space. Also keep in mind that scorpions are very good climbers, and tropical scorpions in particular will need very high walls to prevent escape. Decorate the terrarium with wood, plants and rocks to approximate the natural habitat. Make sure to provide multiple hiding places, such as by arranging rocks to create a cave.



#### Substrate:

Provide 3-6" of substrate to allow your scorpion to burrow. Use play sand for desert scorpions, and keep it very dry. For tropical scorpions, use soil, peat or vermiculate, keep it moist, and include pieces of sphagnum moss to help maintain humidity.

#### Heating:

Provide a temperature gradient from about 70-90°F. This allows the scorpion to regulate its body temperature as needed. Place an under-tank heating mat under 1/3 of the tank so that the scorpion can move from warmer to cooler temperatures if desired. Use thermometers in a few locations to monitor temperatures within the tank.

#### Water/Humidity:

Provide a very shallow dish of water for your scorpion. Tropical scorpions need humidity: mist their enclosure daily. Desert scorpions can have their tank lightly misted once or twice a week.

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### Basic Guide to Scorpion Species

- ❖ Remember that **all** scorpions have venom and should not be handled unless necessary.
- ❖ **Good First Scorpions:**
  - *Pandinus imperator* – Emperor or Imperial Scorpion
  - *Pandinus cavimanus* – Tanzanian Redclaw Scorpion (This scorpion is more aggressive than the Emperor Scorpion but still suitable for beginners.)
  - *Heterometrus* species – Forest Scorpions
  - *Hadogenes* species – Rock Scorpions
- ❖ **Intermediate-level Scorpions**
  - *Hadrurus arizonensis* – Desert Hairy Scorpion (Fairly aggressive)
  - *Oposthophthalmus* species – Burrowing Scorpions (Aggressive; Very painful sting)
- ❖ **Scorpions to AVOID:**
  - *Androctonus* species – Fat-tailed Scorpions (Potentially lethal)
  - *Centruroides* species – Bark Scorpions (Potentially lethal)
  - *Leiurus quinquestriatus* – Deathstalker Scorpion (Potentially lethal)
  - *Scorpio maurus* – Large-clawed or Israeli Gold Scorpion (This scorpion is very aggressive, but sometimes young *Androctonus australis* – Yellow Fat-tailed Scorpion – are mistakenly identified and sold as *Scorpio maurus*. Beginners should avoid both!)

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