



Fish & Feather

Insect and arachnid care, part one.

SCORPIONIDA

Description:	Typical
Housing:	Small Aquarium 1ft
Feeding:	Vertebrates & Invertebrates
Moisture:	Required Via Cotton Wool
Disease:	Nil Known
Lifespan:	Eight - Ten Years

CHARACTERISTICS:

Scorpions are definitely amongst some of Australia's largest known arachnids species and may obtain lengths of 12 to 15 centimetres they are easily recognizable from all other Invertebrates.

They possess features such as:

- Four pairs of leg's which are a characteristic of all arachnid, One pair of palp's these palp's have been modified to pincers which are used for a variety of purpose such as mating, defense and also attack. The abdomen which thins or tapers into a tail like appearance, this has a sting located at the very tip and contains two poison glands. The tail or sting is not always held above the body in a defence position. Australian scorpions are not deadly like their foreign ancestors, although an Australian scorpion sting is still quite painful. Only a small number of deaths have been associated with the sting from Australian scorpions.

HABITAT:

Australian scorpions inhabit a variety of areas, as such making the scorpion one of few successful arachnids to inhabit dry and desert areas. Desert species usually dig burrows into the earth these vary in depth as well as shape. Species of scorpion also inhabit forested areas of Australia and may also be found under the bark of living tree's, rocks in log hollows and even amongst leaf litter.

LIFE CYCLE:

Scorpions mating rituals are somewhat amazing, as the male grasps the females modified palps a dance is performed. During the dance the male deposits a sperm sac and manoeuvres the female over this sac allowing the sperm to enter her reproductive opening. Unlike other arachnid the female scorpion give birth to live young which are not encased within a sac. These live young are then carried on the female's back for several weeks before they are ready to fend for themselves. Like all other arachnids several moults are required before sexual maturity is adopted.

FEEDING:

Living as nocturnal feeder's scorpions feed on other arachnid, small invertebrate centipede, millipede as well as small vertebrates. The prey is normally seized with the pincers before the venom from the stinger is injected. This venom liquefies the internals of the prey and softens the exoskeleton allowing the pincers to tear pieces off for food, these soft tissue pieces are passed toward the mouth and consumed.