

Family Pet & Aquarium

7 Days

156 Marshalltown Rd, Grovedale

Ph 5244 4205

Hermit Crabs

Hermit Crabs make wonderful pets as they are friendly, intelligent, odour free and very clean. They have evolved to live on land and use an empty shell as a portable home, as well as protection. Remember, hermit crabs are a land animal and must NOT be kept in water.

HABITAT AND LIFE SPAN

The Hermit Crab is somewhat nocturnal by nature and will often sleep for most of the day. Low temperatures will also make them inactive and they will retract back into their shell. The more crabs you have the more active they become! They will live for many years if you follow these simple instructions, and over time they will become so friendly you will consider them part of your family.

HOUSING

Use an aquarium with a glass top, as this creates a humid environment which is essential for crab's well being. The floor of the aquarium should be kept dry and can be covered in pet litter, wood shavings or shell grit. Hermit Crabs love to climb and exercise so a piece of driftwood or mangrove root is ideal.

HEATING

Hermit Crabs are tropical so they must be kept around 26C. The temperature should never be allowed to fall below 20C. As hot air rises, the most effective way of heating the aquarium is with a *Heat Mat* that sticks onto the base of the aquarium. These mats emit an even heat over the base which stimulates activity. A desk lamp with a low wattage bulb may also be used. It is important that you place a thermometer in the tank to monitor the temperature.

WATER

Hermit Crabs need two bowls of water that should be changed as required. The first must contain freshwater for drinking, the second saltwater for bathing. This can be mixed using *Hermit Crab Salt* at a rate of 1 teaspoon per 100ml, make sure you use heavy bowls as Hermit Crabs will easily tip over light containers.

DIET

Like all animals, Hermit Crabs have special dietary needs. Their staple diet should be specially formulated Hermit Crab pellets which contain all the vitamins and minerals they need. As a treat they can also be offered corn flakes, shredded coconut, apple and other varieties of fruit. Ensure they are given fresh food daily.

SHELLS

One of the fascinating things about Hermit Crabs is that they live in other creatures discarded shells. As they grow they will leave their old shell and find another larger one to move in to. To assist the crabs with this, a few spare shells should be kept in the aquarium for such occasions. As the crabs can be fussy about which shell should be their new home; make sure that the shells are only slightly larger than the one that they are currently living in.

MOLTING

Like other crabs, as they grow Hermit Crabs need to cast off their outer skeleton, this usually occurs about twice a year. After the crab has molted it needs to be left alone for several weeks until its new skeleton hardens.

AVAILABILITY

Hermit crabs are generally readily available at Geelong's Family Pet and Aquarium so gives us a call or come in store and we'll help you set up your new family member.

