



Western New York Herpetological Society

www.wnyherp.org

Updated 3/05

Brown House Cricket Care

Species Introduction: The Brown House Cricket or *Acheta domesticus* is the recommend species. Crickets live up to 8 weeks and grow/develop rapidly depending on temperature. A full sized adult cricket will live no longer than two weeks. Generally speaking you should purchase crickets of appropriate size for your reptiles within a two-week margin of growth.

Housing: A variety of different option exists from commercially purchased cricket tubs, Rubbermaid tubs, aquariums, or garbage cans. The container has to be large enough to accommodate the cricket and allow room for waste to accumulate with out the crickets being in continual contact with it. A height of at least 18" is beneficial, as it will prevent crickets from jumping out while cleaning, etc. Plastic boxing tape, applied to the upper 1/3 of this container, will prevent crickets from climbing up the walls as the surface is too slipper for them to grip. A tight fitting lid with plenty of ventilation is required. The plastic lid that came with the container can be modified by making a large hole and gluing small mesh screen in place. Metal screening works best as crickets can chew through the fiberglass screens over time. A variety of substrates can be used but having a bare bottom is the best choice for cleanliness reasons. Crickets should be kept warm between 75°F - 85°F. While lighting isn't required an incandescent bulb can be used to provide heat and should be on a 16/8 schedule. Egg crates and or paper towel tubes should be added to the enclosure. Crickets are territorial and cannibalistic. Without hiding spots the will kill and eat each other.

Feeding: A food bowl should be in the enclosure at all times. Crickets are omnivorous. Commercial diets exist as well as several home brew recipes. They can be fed a variety of fresh vegetables, chicken mash, grains, cat food, and meats. Vitamins and Calcium should be added to the food bowls. Crickets fed a good diet will be more nutritious for the animal they are being fed to. Crickets need a constant source of water. This can be challenging as crickets can drown in small amount of standing water. Several choices exist and all work equally well. These include a damp sponge, paper towels, cotton balls, or fresh fruits. A commercial watering device is also available. The water should be dechlorinated before offering to the crickets.

Maintenance: Crickets are very sensitive. No fumes, chemicals, etc should be allowed to come in contact with them. The enclosure should be cleaned at least one time per week. Dead crickets, casing, and waste need to be removed. Decaying crickets produce toxins that will kill living crickets and create a fowl environment. Fresh food should be added several times a week as well as ensuring water is available. Between shipments of crickets the entire enclosure should be cleaned with hot water and possibly a mild soap/bleach solution. Again crickets are sensitive so thorough rinsing is a must.

Handling: Upon receiving an order of crickets they will need to be transferred into your cricket holding enclosure. This can be done several ways. A simple way is to place the box of crickets into a large trash bag. Then cut open the box and shake out the crickets and egg crates. Each egg crate should be shaken out and placed in the enclosure. Once the bag contains only crickets they can be dumped into the enclosure in a controlled manner. This process can be done outdoors to prevent escapes. Removing crickets can be done in the same manner illustrated above. A paper towel tube in the enclosure also works well for this purpose. Crickets in the tube can be shaken into a cup or other container. These crickets should be dusted with calcium and vitamins prior to feeding reptiles. For difficult feeders crickets can be chilled to slow down their activity level. Freezing can also humanly euthanize them. Forceps feeding is achieved by holding a back leg in the forceps.

© 2001 – 2005 by Western New York Herpetological Society

This document is for guidance only and should not be used as the sole source of information. New information is being developed daily. It is recommend that a concerted effort be made to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the animals of interest.