



## DIET & HEALTH

Hermit Crab food mix is available which contains an array of all the protein and nutrients they need. They also eat meat, fish food flakes, pellets, live foods, vegetables, bread, cereal, fruit and dry biscuit. Remember a good variety is best and always removed spoiled food as your crab may not eat all of it. This is normal, just make sure there is always fresh food available for them.

A water drinking bowl is needed but Hermit Crabs are land crabs and whilst able to survive under water for lengthy periods of time, they will eventually drown. Ensure the water bowl is sturdy and can't be tipped over. Sponges are sold to put in bowls that are too deep to safeguard drowning.

Once a week whilst cleaning out their habitat put your crabs into a shallow salt bath about 1cm deep (one teaspoon of salt to 100ml of water). Remove your crabs once you have finished. If you have a large enough habitat, put in a separate dish of salty water for them to bathe in. Change their water frequently to keep it clean.

## HOUSING

Use an aquarium with a glass cover, humidity is essential to the crabs well-being. The floor of the aquarium should be kept dry and can be covered with aquarium sand, shell grit or in winter coarse compressed wood is suitable to keep them warm. A piece of driftwood or palm tree ornaments look effective as well, providing a great playground.

Depending on your budget - we have plastic beginner tanks through to complete glass set ups that include heating, sand, food and everything you need for their care.

## HEAT

Hermit crabs are tropical and are best kept at about 26 to 30 degrees c. Do not let the temperatures drop below 20 degrees. Heating can be provided by installing a low watt glove over the top of the aquarium or using a heat mat. If choosing a heat mat, it is important to also have a thermostat to control the temperature. Always make sure a thermometer is used to monitor temperature as well. Low temperature and low humidity also sends them into their shell. Warm humid air and the warmth of your hand is usually sufficient to wake them up. Do not place your crabs near an open flame or heater.

## EXTRA SHELLS

They will climb out of their shell and "put on" a new one from time to time. Therefore, a few spare shells should be kept in the aquarium for this purpose. It is essential that a slightly larger sized shell is available for the crab after it has moulted.

## MOULTING

Like other crabs, the Hermit Crab needs to cast off its outer skeleton, usually twice a year. After it has moulted, the crab needs to be left alone for several weeks until its new skeleton hardens.