

Husbandry Data Sheet

Common Name: *Chilean rose hair tarantula* **Latin Name:** *Grammastola rosea*

Family: Theraphosidae

Order: Araneae

Class: Arachnida

Phylum: Arthropoda

Natural History: Due to massive importations because of the huge number of spiders collected by locals in Chile and the fact that it is the most docile, easy to breed and hardiest of the "pet" spiders, the Rose hair is probably the most prolific and readily available tarantula on the market.

Permits Required: No

Life Stage: Adult

Ease of Care: Easy

Housing:

Temp: 70-85*

Humidity: 60-70%

Substrate: peat moss, soil, vermiculite. As this species is found in a more arid, semi-desert climate, this tarantula prefers to live in dry, well-drained soil. If the soil is suitable, the female digs a deep burrow which she lines with silk webbing. This helps prevent sand and dirt from trickling in. Otherwise, she hides in cracks in logs and under any loose-lying debris.

of Animals per Exhibit: 1

Choose One: Solitary

Compatible Species: none

Enclosure Description: 5 gal. tank or larger

Lighting/Photoperiod: 8-12 hrs. (seasonal)

Furniture/Props: bark, limbs, leaf litter

Escape Concerns: Tarantulas can fit through spaces that appear far too small for them, so you need to make sure your enclosure has no openings whatsoever.

Other Concerns/Precautions: Too much moisture or humidity can cause respiratory problems and death in this species. If a water dish with sponge is available for the spider to drink if it wants to, then spraying is not needed. It is better to err on the side of the exhibit being dryer than letting it get too moist and/or humid. Temps in excess of 90* or below 65* can also be dangerous.

Husbandry

Diet/Frequency of Feeding: crickets and other insects proportionate to the size of the spider, once every other week, a pinkie mouse can be offered to hardy feeders once every other month or so.

Water Source/Frequency: shallow dish w/ sponge

Care: Daily

Enrichment: different foods

Medical/Health Concerns: Too much moisture or humidity can cause respiratory problems and death in this species. Do not leave food animals in the cage for an extended period if the spider doesn't show interest. Do not put food animals in cage if the spider is about to molt, is molting, or within 5 days of completion of molt, as it is in a vulnerable state at this time. Do not handle the spider during or immediately after the molting process.

Treatment: If there is any trauma to the abdomen, over the counter liquid bandage has been used to seal wounds, as the spider can quickly bleed to death if there is an accidental puncture or tear.

Keeper Safety: The only concern for the keeper is if the animal is handled free-hand a bite may occur if the spider is agitated. This would only be a serious problem if the keeper is allergic to the bite. As this is an exceptionally docile species the chances of a bite are very remote, but this can be avoided completely by only moving the spider if absolutely necessary, and if so, by using a cup or other container to "scoop" the spider into to transport it.

Other Concerns/Precautions: Feeding the spider too large a food animal, or too often or too many can lead to the food doing damage to the spider. Too many crickets or other insects left in the enclosure can actually chew on the

Husbandry Data Sheet

spider, or stress the spider out if it cannot get away. Keep in mind that tarantulas can go up to 2 years without eating, so if you are feeding regularly and the spider is not eating every time, it might be a good idea to lower the frequency.

Education

Do you handle species directly with the guests? :No

If Yes or No how do you use the species with the guest:We have displays in the education center at our zoo that are plexiglass boxes that can be viewed close up from all sides so the guests can be near the spider without actual contact. Having a tarantula out of its enclosure with the public is usually not a good idea, as most people have a fear of large spiders and an accident could occur, wherein the guest and/or the tarantula could get hurt. It is generally a good rule never to expose the public to any animal that is venomous or poisonous, no matter how docile it may be. Besides, handling a tarantula in the opening is sure to cause undo stress to the spider, as they are generally a secretive and shy animal. and the few species that are not are certainly not the type of animal you want out of its enclosure anyway.

Conservation/Population Status:

Message:

Personal Comments:Tarantulas can be a very educational and entertaining animals if kept properly and used in a way to demonstrate they don't deserve the bad rep they get in movies, tv, etc. As is the case usually, people only have an unfounded fear of them because they don't understand them and they have probably had a past of the people around them telling them they are "gross" and "disgusting" and "scary" because they don't didn't understand them either. Tarantulas are one of the most exotic and interesting animals I have had the pleasure of dealing with, besides being one of the easiest to care for, as they generally want nothing other than to be left alone.

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