

OVERVIEW						
<p>The Mexican Red-Knee (<i>Brachypelma smithi</i>) inhabits the dry thorn forest of the Pacific coast of southern Mexico (southern coastal Jalisco to northwestern Oaxaca and inland to the State of Mexico and Morelos). It is a fossorial (burrowing) species that lives in burrows in thorny brush thickets and under large rocks. The Red-knee and its cousins like the Mexican Fire-leg (<i>B. boehmei</i>) are certainly the most popular tarantulas. They are beautiful, docile, hardy and long-lived.</p>						
ENVIRONMENT						
Conditions »	Day Temp	70-78°F	Night Temp	68-75°F	Humidity	50-60%
Heat Source »	<p>Usually unnecessary. House enclosure in a warm area that provides appropriate temperature range and minimal drafts, light and vibration. If necessary, terrariums may be heated using a mini heat mat mounted beneath or a very low wattage red bulb. Small containers housing “spiderlings” are best heated by keeping inside a larger heated enclosure that acts as an incubator.</p>					
HOUSING		<p>A simple terrestrial cage with plenty of ventilation (a plastic critter keeper style terrarium is excellent), mostly dry substrate (commercial organic cactus soil mixes are excellent but dry coconut coir or 50/50 sphagnum peat moss/vermiculite mix are just as good), hiding place and small water dish — extra care should be used when raising spiderlings as small containers typically used, such as vials or small jars with lids with small air holes, are too poorly ventilated (we use 16 oz. deli cups with insect cup style lids to raise young <i>Brachypelma</i>). However, young tarantulas do require higher humidity than adults. A light misting once a week will remoisten substrate and provide droplets for drinking.</p>				
DIET		<p>crickets, superworms, grasshoppers, small roaches</p>				
KEEPER SAFETY						
<p>Like most New World tarantulas, Red-knees do have urticating hairs that they brush from their abdomens when disturbed. Although fairly docile spiders, all <i>Brachypelma</i> are notorious for their “hair-flicking”. These hairs can cause moderate to severe irritation in many people. Tarantulas are fragile creatures and we do not advocate handling.</p>						
COMMENTS						
<p>All of the “orange and black” <i>Brachypelma</i> of the Pacific Coast of southern Mexico are awesome pet tarantulas. Their tendency to “hair-flick” is far outweighed by their beauty, docile nature, hardiness and longevity. Females may live more than 20 years and become treasured terrarium pets.</p> <p>For more information on general tarantula care see: http://www.tarantulas.com/care_info.html For information on raising spiderlings and juvenile tarantulas see: http://www.tarantulas.com/spiderlings.html</p> <p>Also see Michael Jacobi’s <i>Tarantulas</i> (Animal Planet Pet Care Library)</p>						