Jumping Spider

Care Guide

# Jumping Spiders

Jumping Spiders make up the Salticidae family of spiders, and include over 6,200 species worldwide, constituting the largest group of spider species. They have become popular pets, due to their curiosity, friendly and docile nature, and ease of care. I truly hope your jumper fits right in at home, and that you get as much joy from them as I do!

Lifespan: Typically, jumping spiders live between 1 and 2 years. They can live less or more depending on illness and care.

# **Housing**

Jumping spiders prefer small enclosures that are taller than they are wide. They are arboreal, so will spend most of their time in the top of the enclosure. For this reason, a bottom opening or front opening enclosure is ideal. Jumpers should be kept individually since they are predatory. The enclosure should be well ventilated on two sides to provide cross ventilation. Decorate the tank to provide enrichment, hiding places, grip assistance, and climbing areas to explore. You may choose to decorate with natural items, and there are many options for bio-active enclosures, or more of a dollhouse style where everything must be attached well using a non-toxic adhesive and porous objects must be sealed with non-toxic sealer.

Feeding

****Jumping Spiders are opportunistic hunters. They have excellent vision and use that to hunt. They must see their prey moving in order to kick in their prey drive, so place live prey within their line of sight. Feed them according to abdomen size. They are ready to eat when their abdomen is smaller than the size of their carapace. The abdomen in a well fed adult female should be just a little bit larger than the width of their head or carapace. The abdomen in a well fed adult male should be the same width as their carapace. Juveniles need more frequent feeding, about twice per week. Be mindful not to overfeed as this can cause problems such as a shorter lifespan or abdominal separation or rupture.

Common feeders include:

Adults may eat Blue or Green bottle flies and larvae, crickets, mealworms, roches, locusts, black soldier flies and larvae, isopods, and more.

For subadults i8-i10, you may feed mini mealworms, small roaches, small crickets, rice flour beetle larvae, bottle flies and larvae, and black soldier fly larvae. See above for feeding tips

For juveniles i5-i7, you may feed mini mealworms, hydei fruit flies, pinhead crickets, rice flour beetle larvae, and bottle fly larvae. See above for feeding tips.

My favorite thing to feed my adults and subadults are Blue or Green Bottle Fly Larvae which pupate into bottle flies. These feeders are not capable of injuring our little ones. They are also really easy to keep in the fridge for 3 months or longer! Just take one out, place in a feeder dish within sight of your jumpers hammock, and watch your sweet babe attack! If they choose not to eat it and it pupates into a hard little brown grain of rice, that’s okay. You can leave it in the enclosure anywhere and it will hatch about 9 days later. Your spood won’t be able to resist it then. I get my Bottle Fly Larvae from Big Fat Phids and have great success. Another great place to get them and other feeders is Mystic Labyrinth.

What I like to feed my little juveniles is mini mealworms that are smaller than they are to build their confidence. I do this as soon as they will take them. As soon as they are big enough around i7, I introduce bottle fly larvae.

Handling

Jumping spiders can be fairly easy to handle and play with. You can use a small paintbrush to gently encourage them out of their enclosure if needed. Do not force them if they keep trying to stay in their hammock, especially if they are a younger jumper because they may be getting ready to molt. When you are wanting to bond with your jumper, my experience shows that letting them come out on their own is the best bet. Even if it takes some time, this will build trust between the two of you. If they are shy, just sit with them in their enclosure with the door open for 20-30 minutes each day while you are doing a calm quiet task like reading, writing, or bills. Continue to check to see if they’ve ventured toward the door to check you out. It may take up to a week or longer before they come out and don’t run right back to their hammock when you put your hand up to the outside of the enclosure. Eventually they will just be too curious and if you are still and calm, they should want to check you out by tapping your hand with their front legs. Eventually they will climb on! Do not be alarmed if they jump right off again. Try not to startle or move. Let them see that it’s safe and they will come back and try again. When they jump, be aware that they do attach a safety line and they will be attached to that so this is a great way to be able to find them if you need to.

Lighting and Heating

Since jumping spiders are diurnal, lighting is required. You can choose an LED light on a 12 hour timer to replicate day and night. Be careful not to place enclosure directly next to a window, as the sunlight can heat up the space next to the glass and make it much too warm for your spider’s enclosure. Only place in front of a window if it’s double paned, energy efficient glass. Never use a heating pad next to under your jumper’s enclosure.

Humidity and Maintenance

Mist the enclosure daily with a fine misting spray bottle. You may use spring water, purified water, or distilled water. You MUST use dechlorinated water. You can spot clean the enclosure using water on a q-tip, only removing food waste and spood poop. Do not remove webbing and try not to wipe down the walls where they have placed anchor points, which aid in climbing. With proper care, pet jumping spider rarely get sick. Do not use chemical cleaning agents, candles, incense, pesticides, or other toxins in the same area or room as your spiders. Always wash hands and rinse well before handling your spiders, as they are very sensitive to smallest amounts of the various things that may be on our hands. If you have other pets that are treated with topical flea products, remember to wash hands and arms thoroughly before handling.

Juveniles

Watching your tiny jumper grow into a grown up is so exciting. When they are getting ready to molt, this is called pre-molt, and they may start spending time in a bit thicker web and be less interested in eating. They will stay in their molting hammock for days to weeks before molting, and additional days to weeks afterward as well. The younger they are, the quicker the molts seem to be. They need plenty of humidity during this time. I like to leave a clean, wet cotton round in the bottom of the cup or enclosure and change it out every day or two. If it turns pink, change asap. That is mold. We don’t want mold. If you don’t want to leave the cotton in, please mist twice per day during the molting process. Once they molt, you will see their exoskeleton in the enclosure! If it’s still in their hammock, no worries, they will clean it out when they are ready. Do not attempt to pull it out yourself unless it is loose and outside of the hammock. Do not attempt to help them molt. Give your spider a couple days after they have molted to come out of their hammock before feeding. Once they come out on their own, they are ready to eat and to show off their new look!

Owning a pet jumping spider is not too complicated compared to other types of spiders. Keep it simple. Enjoy the journey of spider parenthood and cherish the time with your fascinating new pet. I hope you get as much joy from yours as I have from my little fluffs. I know I have really enjoyed the quiet moments with mine.

 -Jen, Little Fluffs n Stuffs