

PRAYING MANTIS

Praying Mantis feed on aphids, beetles, caterpillars, chinch bugs, Colorado potato beetles, leafhoppers, hornworms, leafrollers, squash bugs, thrips and whiteflies. They start off feeding on fruit flies and other tiny insects and as they grow so does their prey. Outdoors, egg cases hatch in mid-June when the weather is hot enough and the daylight hours are longer. Inside, they take anywhere from two to eight weeks to hatch. Egg cases be attached to a plant about a foot or two off the ground. Once hatching commences, all praying mantis will hatch within about one hour. When hatching, the young crawl from between tiny flaps in the cases and hang from silken threads about 2" below the case. After drying out, the long-legged young disperse quickly into the vegetation as they are cannibalistic. It's very difficult to know hatching has occurred unless the elusive, well camouflaged young are found. (The egg case does not change appearance in any way).

Each mantis will set up its own territory where it will live for the summer. If you'd like to see when the mantis have hatched, place the egg cases in a paper bag, fold the top and seal shut with a paper clip or clothes pin. Place the bag on a window sill in direct sunlight. Periodically open the bag carefully, and when you see tiny mantids running around inside, take them outside and sprinkle them throughout the garden or release them into a terrarium.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HATCHING INDOORS

You will need: 1 container (it can be an old aquarium or large plastic jar) netting to cover the container opening, string or rubber band, a pin, twig and misting bottle.

- Cut a piece of netting to fit over the opening of your container/jar.
- Attach the egg case to the twig by pinning the top part of the egg case onto the twig. It is important to pin the egg case at least 5 cm above the floor of the cage.
- Put netting over the opening of the jar and secure with rubber band or string.
- Place container in a warm spot, not directly in the sun.
- Mist daily - this is very important - do not let the egg case dry out.
- Wait patiently. Check egg case daily.
- The mantis can be keep as insect pets as long as they have an ongoing food source.

Coverage – 1600 square feet per egg case