



CONCISE CARE SHEETS

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**PINK-TOES
AND TREE SPIDERS**

INTRO

The tropics of the New World or Americas are home to many popular tree-dwelling tarantulas. These include a wide variety of "Pink-toes" of the genus *Avicularia*, the closely related Antilles "pink-toe" or tree tarantula (*Caribena versicolor*), the lightning-fast and agile *Tapinauchenius* and a handful of species of *Psalmopoeus* like the Venezuelan Suntiger and Trinidad Chevron.

These tarantulas are found in a variety of subtropical and tropical habitats, but their general care is similar enough to cover them all in a single care sheet. Optimal captive husbandry is focused on providing warm, humid air in an enclosure that allows for sufficient ventilation. It is a balancing act of sorts, but the conscientious and cautious keeper soon learns to err on the side of good airflow as it is easier to add moisture than to correct overly damp or stagnant conditions. For example, pouring warm water into one corner of the terrarium to rehydrate the substrate will allow natural humidity through evaporation. This technique, combined with spraying the enclosure's plants and walls with a fine mist of lukewarm water, quickly raises humidity to desired levels and can be repeated as necessary. But if ventilation is poor and the terrarium becomes saturated it is impossible to correct the improper environment without completely tearing down and rebuilding the cage.

CAPTIVE CARE

We have a four-page care guide dedicated to tree-dwelling tarantulas called **ARBOREAL TARANTULA CARE & HOUSING** that details captive husbandry and is applicable to all arboreal species. Please read this comprehensive care sheet to learn more about keeping arboreal tarantulas of all kinds. Herein, the focus will be on some of the popular varieties found in the New World.

AVICULARIA

By far the most popular and common of the New World arboreal tarantulas is the "pink-toe", genus *Avicularia*. A wide variety of "Avics" are available in the pet trade and tarantula hobby. Many are moderately-sized, attractive, hairy spiders and quite a few species are fairly docile, albeit a bit skittish. Some species (for example, *A. minatrix*) are only two or three inches, whereas *A. braunshauseni* and a few other species may approach five. *Avicularia* species and its *Caribena* cousins often build silk "tube socks" as retreats and will typically find a suitable corner of the cage or curled leaf or other feature to construct its home.

We have a care sheet dedicated to the closely related Antilles Pink-toe (*Caribena versicolor*) that is applicable to *Avicularia* species. The tropical forest inhabitants of both genera require fairly identical care. In addition, please refer to our **ARBOREAL TARANTULA CARE & HOUSING** guide.

For both *Avicularia* and *Caribena*, live tropical plants with sturdy broad leaves such as snake plants (*Sansevieria*) or bromeliads are recommended in naturalistic terrariums, while silk or plastic equivalents can also be used. It is ideal if leaves rest upon the terrarium walls or vertical cork or other wood to create confined spaces where the spider might build its retreat.

CARIBENA

The gorgeous Antilles Pink-toe (*Caribena versicolor*) was recently transferred from the genus *Avicularia* to *Caribena*. We have a dedicated care sheet for this enormously popular tarantula. Please refer to it for comprehensive information, which can also be applied to all New World arboreal tarantulas.

A much smaller and less colorful cousin is the Puerto Rican Pink-toe (*C. laeta*). Spiderlings of the two species are very similar (*versicolor* are blue-green and slightly larger than the blue *laeta*) and the care information presented in the *C. versicolor* care sheet may be applied to *C. laeta* as well as most species of *Avicularia*.

QUICK TIPS

- » 76-82°F with a drop in temperature at night (72-76°F)
- » Requires 70-80% humidity, but also good ventilation.
- » Most species will eat a variety of arthropods and small vertebrates yet thrive on roaches or crickets in captivity.

PSALMOPOEUS

The Trinidad Chevron (*Psalmopoeus cambridgei*) and Venezuelan Suntiger (*P. irminia*) are the best known members of a genus popular with tarantula keepers. Both are fairly large (*P. cambridgei* can reach a legspan of seven inches) and make exceptional display subjects for the spacious vertically-oriented forest terrarium. *Psalmopoeus* tarantulas are very hardy and often more forgiving of drier conditions than other New World arboreal tarantulas. Both the Chevron

and Suntiger appreciate a couple of layers of vertical cork bark slabs to perch upon and hide between, and both species may create a retreat low to the ground and even partially burrowed in the substrate.

The Panamanian Blonde (*P. pulcher*) and Costa Rican Orange-mouth (*P. reduncus*) are two other popular species of this genus. They are smaller than the two covered previously, but still can exceed four inches in legspan. Care for these is the same as for the Trinidad Chevron and Venezuelan Suntiger, and they too will appreciate stacked vertical cork bark pieces or cork tubes to utilize for climbing, ambushing prey and a secure hiding place.

TAPINAUCHENIUS

"Taps" are slender and agile. They tend to be very nervous, even defensive, and are perhaps the fastest-moving of all tarantulas. It is best to provide them numerous hiding places such as cork tubes stood on end so they have security and are less likely to exit an opened enclosure. They may build silk retreats similar to that of Avics, and can be housed in the same style of terrarium.

Taps have a shiny, shimmering appearance that ranges in color from brown to purple. Despite the uniformity of their coloration they are quite beautiful. They are noted for "dimples" on their abdomen and a lustrous, iridescent almost-metallic pubescence on the carapace. Few specimens exceed four inches or so and they can be housed and bred in smaller terrariums, even tall gallon jars.

SPECIAL NOTE

The common "Pink-toe" (*Avicularia avicularia*) and some other members of the genus *Avicularia* are known for being rare exceptions to the one spider per cage rule. These Avics can be housed communally with some success. However, most tarantulas have cannibalistic tendencies and the majority of tarantulas cannot be housed together at any age. Even spiderlings will soon feed on their siblings.



TRINIDAD CHEVRON