



Gooty Sapphire Ornamental Tarantula Care Guide

Poecilotheria metallica — Pocock, 1899

Experience	Lifespan	Adult Legspan	Origin
Advanced	Up to 12–15 years (females)	6–8 in DLS	Southern India

Natural History

Poecilotheria metallica — the Gooty Sapphire Ornamental — is an arboreal Old World species found only in a tiny patch of deciduous forest in central southern India. Its wild range is so small and so threatened that the species is listed as Critically Endangered, and all hobby stock is captive-bred — never wild-collected.

In the wild it shelters in tree hollows and crevices, flattening itself into bark with remarkable camouflage despite its colour. In captivity it is an arboreal that needs height, secure bark retreats, and humidity paired with ventilation — but its care is defined as much by **safety** as by husbandry.

It is arguably the most beautiful tarantula in the world: brilliant metallic blue legs overlaid with an intricate cream-and-black fractal pattern. It is also blisteringly fast, defensive, has **no urticating hairs**, and carries medically significant venom — strictly a spider for experienced keepers.

Housing

This is an arboreal species, so height matters more than floor space. Use a tall enclosure with cross-ventilation (vents on opposite sides or front and top) and tall anchor points for webbing. A front- or side-opening enclosure is ideal, as reaching down from above startles the spider and tears its web.

Life Stage	Enclosure	Notes
Spiderling (under 1")	Tall vented vial / small arboreal cup	Vertical cork, anchor points, light moisture, heavy ventilation
Juvenile (1–3")	Tall acrylic or 2–4 gal vertical	Cork tube, fake foliage, cross-ventilation
Sub-adult / Adult (3"+)	12×12×18 in (or taller) vertical	Vertical cork bark, plants, water dish, strong cross-ventilation

Provide a vertical cork bark slab or tube against one wall, plus fake plants, so the spider can build its tube-web off the ground. A shallow layer of substrate (2–3 in) holds light moisture and cushions any fall, but this species lives up top, not in the dirt.

Temperature & Humidity

Warm, humid, and well-ventilated mirrors the island canopy. Achieving humidity *without* stagnant air is the whole game with this species.

Parameter	Target	Notes
Temperature	75–85°F (24–29°C)	Stable warmth; avoid sustained drops below 70°F
Ambient Humidity	65–75% RH	Moderately high — always paired with good cross-ventilation
Moisture	Light misting	Mist part of the bark/wall every few days; keep substrate slightly moist
Water	Water dish	Provide a dish; the spider also drinks misted droplets

SAFETY FIRST

The biggest risk with this species is not husbandry but handling and escapes. It is one of the fastest tarantulas in the hobby and carries medically significant venom. Always work with the enclosure closed or in a sealed room, keep a catch cup ready, and make sure the lid latches securely after every maintenance.

Feeding

The Gooty Sapphire is a fast, aggressive feeder that ambushes prey from its bark retreat. It rarely refuses a meal outside of pre-moult.

Prey: Gut-loaded crickets, Dubia roaches, and other feeder insects. Keep prey no larger than the spider's abdomen.

Frequency: Spiderlings twice a week, juveniles every 5–7 days, adults every 7–10 days. Keep moisture and water consistent, as arboreals are more prone to dehydration than terrestrials.

Remove uneaten prey within 24 hours — and only ever open the enclosure with the spider located and a catch cup ready, given its speed.

Moulting

The Gooty Sapphire typically moults inside its bark retreat. Spiderlings start a drab grey-blue and intensify toward the electric metallic blue of the adult with each moult. Growth is moderate, slowing to once or twice a year in adults.

Pre-moult signs: A darkened abdomen, food refusal, and increased time sealed in the web. Remove all live prey at the first signs.

Post-moult: Leave the spider completely undisturbed and wait 7–14 days before feeding so the new exoskeleton and fangs harden. Keep humidity steady throughout — fresh moults are vulnerable to drying out.

Handling

Handling is strongly discouraged for the Gooty Sapphire. As an Old World species it has **no urticating hairs** — its defences are blistering speed and a bite delivering medically significant venom. Documented bites from *Poecilotheria* can cause severe, prolonged muscle cramping, sweating, and systemic pain that may last for days. There is no safe reason to handle one.

Treat this as an observation-only species. Use long tools for all maintenance, keep a catch cup on hand, rehouse only with experience and a sealed work area, and never open the enclosure without first locating the spider. Seek medical attention promptly for any bite.

This guide was compiled using commonly accepted husbandry practices from experienced keepers and industry-standard tarantula care resources.

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