



Indian Ornamental Tarantula Care Guide

Poecilotheria regalis — Pocock, 1899

Experience	Lifespan	Adult Legspan	Origin
Advanced	Up to 12 years (females)	6–7 in DLS	India

Natural History

Poecilotheria regalis — the Indian Ornamental — is an arboreal Old World species native to the forests of central and southern India. It lives in tree hollows and under bark, where its intricate patterning provides near-perfect camouflage against weathered wood.

As a member of genus *Poecilotheria*, it needs an arboreal setup — height, secure bark retreats, and humidity balanced with ventilation. But like all "pokies," its defining requirement is keeper experience: this is a fast, defensive species with **no urticating hairs** and medically significant venom.

Adults wear an ornate mosaic of grey, cream, and black across the body, with vivid yellow-and-black banding on the undersides of the legs that flashes in a threat display. Often described as one of the calmer *Poecilotheria*, it is still blindingly quick and absolutely not a beginner's spider.

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	70–80% RH	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 handling and escapes, not husbandry. It is extremely fast and carries medically significant venom. Always work with the enclosure closed or in a sealed room, keep a catch cup ready, and confirm the lid latches securely after every maintenance.

Feeding

The Indian Ornamental is a fast, confident 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 open the enclosure once the spider is located and a catch cup is ready.

Moulting

The Indian Ornamental typically moults inside its bark retreat. Each moult sharpens the intricate grey-and-cream patterning and the yellow leg banding. 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 Indian Ornamental. As an Old World species it has **no urticating hairs** — its defences are extreme speed and a bite delivering medically significant venom. Documented *Poecilotheria* bites can cause severe, prolonged muscle cramping, sweating, and systemic pain lasting days. Even the "calmer" reputation of this species does not make handling safe.

Treat it as an observation-only animal. Use long tools for all maintenance, keep a catch cup ready, 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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