



Colombian Lesserblack Tarantula Care Guide

Xenesthis immanis — Ausserer, 1875

Experience	Lifespan	Adult Legspan	Origin
Intermediate–Advanced	15–20 years (females)	7–8 in DLS	Northern South America

Natural History

Xenesthis immanis — the Colombian Lesserblack — is a large terrestrial species from the warm, humid lowland forests of northern South America, including Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama. It shelters in burrows and under cover on the forest floor, where deep soil stays damp and warm year-round.

It is a prized display tarantula, valued for its size and colour: a dark, velvety body with a striking pale "starburst" pattern on the carapace and a deep pink-to-purple iridescence across the legs and abdomen that flares under good lighting. That beauty, plus its demand for stable warmth and humidity, places it with intermediate-to-advanced keepers.

Juveniles are shy and reclusive, spending much of their time hidden, while adults grow bolder and more often sit out on display. It is a hardy spider once its humidity needs are met, but its size and energy reward keepers with some experience under their belt.

Housing

The Colombian Lesserblack is a large terrestrial species. Prioritise floor space and a good depth of moisture-retaining substrate, and keep the enclosure low to protect this heavy spider from falls.

Life Stage	Enclosure	Notes
Spiderling (under 1.5")	Vented container with deep substrate	Damp substrate, burrow depth, small water source
Juvenile (2–4")	1–3 gal with deep substrate	Moist substrate, cork hide, water dish
Sub-adult / Adult (5"+)	18×18×12 in (or larger), low	6 in of moist substrate, large cork hide, big water dish

Provide around 6 inches of moisture-retaining substrate — coconut fibre and topsoil with some sphagnum — plus a large cork hide and a sturdy water dish. Maintain ventilation alongside the humidity so the enclosure stays fresh.

Temperature & Humidity

Warm and humid reflects the lowland forest floor. Aim for high humidity through damp substrate rather than a sealed, stagnant box.

Parameter	Target	Notes
Temperature	75–80°F (24–27°C)	Close to room temperature; avoid sustained drops below 70°F
Ambient Humidity	75–85% RH	High — maintained mainly through damp substrate
Substrate	Damp, not waterlogged	Keep the lower layers moist; overflow the water dish as needed
Water	Large water dish	Always full; aids both drinking and humidity

MOST COMMON MISTAKE

Letting it get too dry. The Colombian Lesserblack needs consistent humidity for healthy moults — but pair that damp substrate with ventilation so the enclosure never turns stagnant and mouldy.

Feeding

This is a strong, enthusiastic feeder that grows into a substantial spider. It takes large prey readily and rarely refuses food outside of pre-moult.

Prey: Large gut-loaded crickets, Dubia roaches, and locusts. Keep prey no larger than the spider's abdomen.

Frequency: Juveniles every 5–7 days, adults every 7–10 days. Aim for a plump but not over-stretched abdomen.

Remove uneaten prey within 24 hours, especially during pre-moult when the spider is vulnerable.

Moulting

Stable humidity is important for a clean moult in this species. Each moult renews the pale carapace star and the purple iridescence at their most vivid.

Pre-moult signs: A darkened abdomen, food refusal, lethargy, and retreat into the hide or burrow. Remove all live prey at the first signs and keep the substrate damp.

Post-moult: Leave the spider undisturbed and wait 1–2 weeks before feeding so the new exoskeleton and fangs harden fully. Keep humidity steady throughout.

Handling

Handling is not recommended for the Colombian Lesserblack. It is large, powerful, and can be skittish or defensive, and a fall would seriously injure a spider of this weight. It is best appreciated as a display animal.

Urticating hairs are present and may be kicked off the abdomen when the spider feels threatened — they can cause notable skin and eye irritation. Interact with the enclosure rather than the spider, use long tools for maintenance, and keep any rehousing low and contained.

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

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