

CARING FOR YOUR STICK INSECTS

You will need:

- a supply of fresh gum leaves
- a tall container (vertical height is important)

Types of containers you can use:

1. **Broccoli Box.** Cut a large window in the lid. Tape some fine mesh over the window.

Stand the box on its end and place a vase of gum leaves inside.

2. **Cylinder.** Take two plastic pot-plant bases, approximately 25-30 cm across. Drill air holes in one. This will be the top. The other will be the base. Take a large sheet of thin acrylic or polycarbonate sheet, bend into a cylinder and fasten with tape. The cylinder should fit snugly into the base and lid, and stand about 75 cm high.

3. **Aquarium.** An aquarium standing on its end with a fine mesh front makes an excellent enclosure.

4. **Plastic greenhouse.** A commercial kit greenhouse with transparent plastic covering makes a great home for stick insects. Make sure you punch lots of holes in the top to make sure your pets get plenty of ventilation, and keep it well away from direct sunlight.

Caring for stick insects.

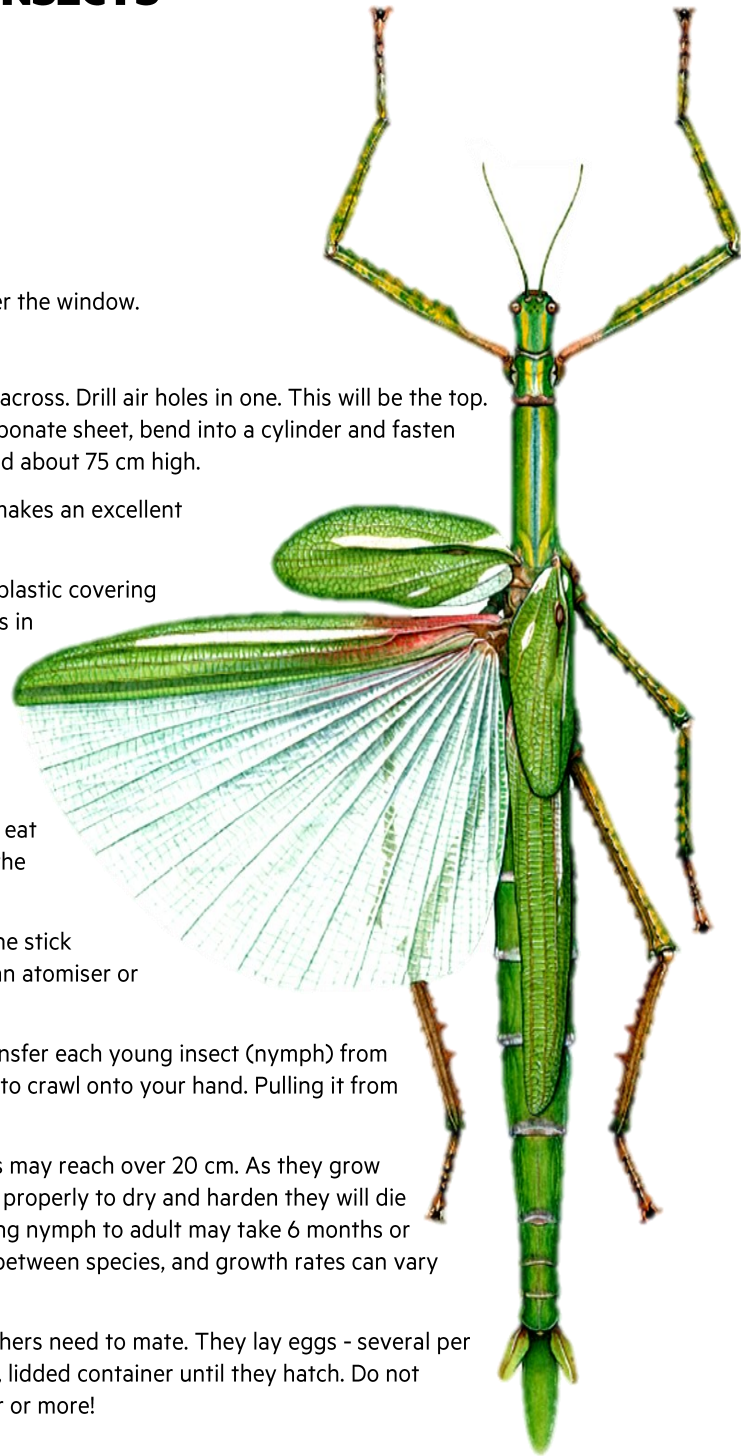
1. **Feeding.** Stick insects are vegetarians. Unlike preying mantises, they eat only leaves. They need a regular fresh supply of tender gum leaves. If the vase is kept full the leaves should last about a week.

2. **Water.** It is important to keep the enclosure humid **but not wet** or the stick insects will die. Spray a small area of the leaves 2-3 times a week with an atomiser or mister.

3. **Handling.** When you change the leaves you will need to carefully transfer each young insect (nymph) from the old leaves to the new ones. To do so, gently encourage the nymph to crawl onto your hand. Pulling it from the foliage with even moderate force may cause it to lose limbs.

4. **Growing.** The nymphs have a lot of growing to do, and some species may reach over 20 cm. As they grow they moult, and to moult they need space to hang. If they cannot hang properly to dry and harden they will die or become deformed. This is why the enclosure must be tall. From young nymph to adult may take 6 months or more, and the adult may live for a further 6 months. These times vary between species, and growth rates can vary throughout the year.

5. **Breeding.** Females of some species can reproduce without males. Others need to mate. They lay eggs - several per day - for several months. The eggs can be collected and kept in a clear, lidded container until they hatch. Do not expect instant results. Hatching may take many months, or even a year or more!



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Broccoli Box



Plastic Greenhouse

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INSECTS
AT THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM?
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ABOUT OUR SCHOOL PROGRAMMES,
FACT SHEETS AND RESOURCES.**



**QUEENSLAND
MUSEUM**

School Programmes

Learning programs offer creative exploration and investigation of museum objects and/or stories through programs developed specifically to support the Australian Curriculum.

- Program led by Museum staff
- \$6 per student
- Supervising adults FREE
- Minimum 20 students
- Available during Queensland school terms
- More topics listed on website

More information about school programmes, including how to book, is available from our website: www.qm.qld.gov.au
Look under [Learning Resources > Schools and Groups > School Programs](#)

Investigating Insects



Audience: Prep - Year 5
Duration: 30 minutes

Biodiversity and Classification



Audience: Years 7-12
Duration: 45 minutes

Animal Classification



Audience: Years 3-6
Duration: 30 minutes

Also available on the QM website:

Resources

Fact sheets, activity sheets, videos, games, teacher notes, and online learning programmes for schools and groups, kids and families, and adults.

Look under [Learning Resources > Resources](#)

Find out about Insects

Look under [Find out about > Animals of Queensland > Insects](#)

Ask an Expert

Look under [Find out about > Ask an Expert](#)

QM Loans

Teachers can borrow kits and sets of museum specimens and artefacts

Look under [Learning Resources > QM Loans](#)

