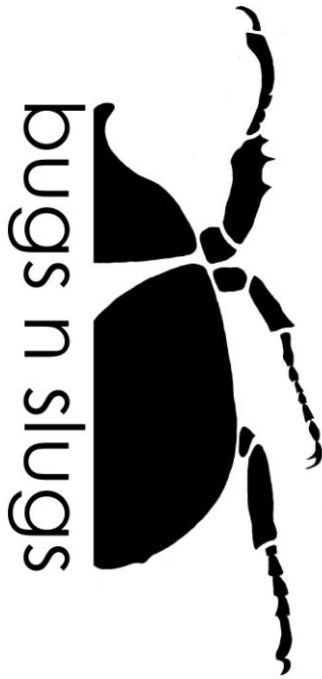


Hatch your own stick insect...



You will need

- **A clean plastic takeaway (or similar) container**
 - **with a secure lid**
 - **A piece of fly screen**
 - **Some paper towel**
 - **Glue or Silicon**
 - **Scissors**
 - **(Decoration for the outside of your container – optional)**
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- **Some stick insect eggs**

First make your hatchery...

1. Ask an adult to help you cut a hole in the centre of the lid. The hole needs to be about the size of a 50 cent piece.
2. Use some craft glue (or silicon) to glue some mesh over the hole. (Hint, run a ring of glue around the hole first, then place the mesh over the glue and gently use your finger to smear the glue that oozes through the holes in the mesh so you end up with a layer of glue under and on top of the mesh. This will hold it better.)
3. Cover the base of the container with a piece of paper towel that you have folded to fit.

Activate your eggs...

1. Spray the paper towel on the bottom of your hatchery with water so that the paper towel is wet. All the water should be soaked up by the towel and there shouldn't be 'free water' on the bottom of the container. If there is, tip out the excess water and let it drain until no more drips from the towel.
2. Place your eggs on the wet paper towel and place the lid on the container.

Maintain the environment...

Stick insect eggs can take several months to several years to hatch, depending on the species; so you will need to be patient. Really, really patient! To give them the best chance of hatching you need to maintain the correct environmental conditions.

Most stick insect eggs require similar conditions to achieve optimal hatching rates. I have had them hatch under extreme conditions (both too hot, too cold, too dry and too wet) but hatching rates and subsequent survival rates are considerably reduced. To give them the best chance of hatching you need to create the following conditions...

Temperature

25 – 30°C (dropping no lower 20 -25°C at night)

I use artificial means to maintain the correct conditions for hatching eggs but this is an expensive option for hobbyists. You can overcome this by finding a spot in your house that is already warm. On top of an aquarium light or on top of / near too an electrical appliance that heats up (computer, fridge motor, big screen t.v – they all get pretty warm). Another solution is an LED lamp. Remember if you are in a Southern State (like Vic or SA) it is the cold at night that will slow down your hatching eggs. So on a day that is 20 degrees I would pay more attention to making sure the eggs are warm at night.

Humidity (moisture in the air)

70 – 85%

This is achieved by a combination of the warm temperatures and the wet paper towel. By not allowing the paper towel to dry out there is a constant source of moisture that can evaporate into the air in the container, maintaining humidity– if the paper towel does dry out, use a spray bottle to respray it.

It's ok to spray the eggs they won't mind but watch out for mould! Mould loves warm, humid environments. If you notice the paper towel going mouldy, simply replace it. If the eggs are going mouldy gently remove them and wipe the mould off with a clean paper towel and replace the eggs in the hatchery.

So now you are ready to wait for your eggs to hatch. Check your hatchery twice a week. A stick insect that hatches can survive a few days before it has to eat.

When and how should you discard unhatched eggs?

Even eggs that are viable when laid can fail to develop and hatch. If after two years your eggs have not hatched then it is safe to discard them. All the species of stick insect eggs supplied by Bugsnslugs are tropical species that will not thrive outside in SA. As a general rule, it is recommended that you freeze the eggs before you discard them to make sure they don't hatch in a place they don't belong.

One has hatched! What should I do?

Visit www.bugsnslugs.com.au to identify your stick insect then email us for a care sheet on your species.