

Preserving your Live Food

Notes on Crickets

Brown & Black crickets of the appropriate size for the animal are suitable for most lizards, some amphibians, invertebrates & insect eating snakes such as the Rough Green Snake *Ophedrys aestivus*. Black crickets are more suited to animals that are kept in a high humidity environment as they cope with this better than the browns. Crickets should be removed from their "cricket tub" into a larger escape proof container that is well ventilated. This serves two purposes, the crickets will last longer and also Black crickets and some large Browns have been known to chew their way through the tubs that they are sold in. Crickets do best at room temperature. As crickets are territorial, and will fight and kill one another, it is a good idea to provide plenty of shelter. An excellent choice would be egg boxes, apart from providing hiding places, the egg box can be lifted out complete with crickets which can be shook into a plastic bag, ready to start feeding your pets.

Crickets should be fed regularly with highly nutritious foods such as a mixture of porridge oats and bran, fresh fruit and vegetables or one of the commercially produced cricket foods. Water/moisture is a must especially for micro/small crickets that have a tendency to dehydrate very quickly, so either a shallow container with a ball of wet cotton wool must be provided or high water content foods such as orange segments, potato slices should be offered regularly.

Nutritional Content of Crickets

Moisture: 69.07%

Fat, 6.01 %

Protein: 20.27%

Fiber: 3.2 %

Notes on Locusts

Slower moving than crickets Locusts are ideal for slower moving creatures, many Chameleons like Locusts as part of their diet. Locusts should also ideally be moved from their "cricket tub" and placed in a suitable container. If they are to be kept for extended periods of time, you will have to give them supplementary heat, unlike crickets they require above room temperatures, ideally between 90-95 degrees Fahrenheit. Being desert insects they do not require water, high humidity will kill them. Any moisture they need will be absorbed through the food you give them. Locusts are herbivores, so a diet of fruit and vegetables and bran can be offered. Locusts of all sizes are great jumpers, it is only the adults that have wings are able to fly.

Notes on Mealworms

Mealworms are the larvae of the darkling beetle, they stay at this stage for approx three months they then pupate, this lasts approx two weeks before little beige coloured beetles emerge, within two days these turn dark brown and eventually black.

Mealworms can be offered to vary your pets diet, and most will relish them. They can also be used to feed wild birds in the winter months.

Remove the mealworms from their packaging and place in a shallow dish that is filled with bran or rolled oats, a cat litter tray is ideal. Mealworms will feed on the bran, as they grow they shed their skins like reptiles/invertebrates do. You might want to put a piece of fruit or raw potato in one corner of the container, so as they have a form of moisture should require it. Mealworms can be kept in the refrigerator to slow down the pupae stage, but at this temperature they will not eat, it is better to keep them at room temperature as they will be more nutritious to your animals with a gut full of food.

Nutritional Content of Mealworms

Moisture: 62.44%

Fat: 12.72%

Protein: 20.27%

Fiber: 1.73%

Notes on Wax worms

A great favorite with many reptiles/amphibians etc. Wax worms are the larval stage of the Wax Moth. Wax worms can be refrigerated this keeps them in a hibernated state. Leave them in the containers you brought them in, no additional substrate or food is needed, as they are packed in a mixture of bran & honey. If kept cold wax worms will remain dormant until you feed them to your pet. On returning to room temperature they become active again. Wax worms have a soft exoskeleton making them very nutritious, easily digested and a great source of protein, moisture and fat, especially useful food item for feeding to females that have just laid eggs/gave birth and to convalescing animals.

Nutritional Content of Wax Worms

Moisture: 61.73%

Fat: 22.19%

Protein: 15.70%

Fiber: 7.69%