Bumblebee Millipede Care Guide

Anadenobolus monilicornis

The edible substrate supplies both shelter and the main diet. A colony needs replenished decomposing hardwood leaves and soft rotten wood, not a thin layer of coco fiber topped with vegetables.

Species Profile

Common name: Bumblebee Millipede

Scientific name: *Anadenobolus monilicornis*

Adult size: About 2-3 in (5-8 cm) body length

Average lifespan: 3-5 years

Native range: Caribbean; introduced populations include southern Florida

Habitat and activity: Terrestrial/burrowing detritivore in leaf litter and decaying wood

Diet: Decaying hardwood leaves and soft rotten wood; produce as extras

Care difficulty: Beginner

Shopping List

- Secure ventilated enclosure with the floor area and substrate depth described under Housing.
- Pesticide-free decaying hardwood leaf litter, soft white-rotted hardwood and suitable soil; low cork cover.
- Sprayer, digital thermometer, and small portions of supplementary vegetables.
- Optional springtails; a small calcium source can be offered separately.

Housing

A footprint of about 16 × 10 in (41 × 25 cm) is a useful starting point for a few adults. Provide substrate at least as deep as the animal is long where practical; start with 3-4 in (8-10 cm) or more. More space and food are needed as the colony grows.

Lighting & UVB

Provide an ordinary day/night cycle with shaded retreats. Specialized UVB is not an established requirement for these millipedes. Avoid direct sunlight and lamps that heat or dry the substrate.

Heating & Temperature

A useful daytime range is 70-80°F (21-27°C), with cooler sheltered areas and a modest night drop toward 68-75°F (20-24°C). Ordinary room conditions often suffice; measure the actual enclosure.

Keep the enclosure away from direct sun, radiators and hot equipment. Do not use bottom heat to dry burrowing substrate. If the room is too cold, stabilizing the room is usually easier to control than heating a small enclosure directly.

Humidity & Ventilation

Moist lower substrate and partly drier surface; substrate condition matters more than an ambient percentage. Check moisture below the surface with minimal disturbance at an edge. Air humidity alone cannot tell you whether a buried animal has access to water.

Water one portion of the substrate as needed so moist deep refuges remain available. Keep drainage and ventilation effective. Do not dry the entire enclosure or flood it to create humidity.

Water & Hydration

Hydration comes primarily from moist substrate and moisture-rich food. A large open water dish is unnecessary and can drown small offspring. Maintain moisture in the deeper refuge without digging through occupied molt chambers.

Use clean water and equipment free of pesticide or detergent residue. Small produce portions support hydration but cannot replace moist substrate or the main detritus diet.

Substrate

Provide at least 3-4 in (8-10 cm), preferably more, of pesticide-free soil mixed generously with partly decomposed hardwood leaves and soft white-rotted hardwood. Keep lower layers moist, replenish food material and avoid disturbing buried animals. Avoid coco fiber as the sole bedding, aromatic woods, fertilizer and pesticide contamination.

Food & Feeding

Decaying hardwood leaves and soft rotten hardwood are the main food and must remain available in the substrate. Offer small vegetable portions, such as squash or carrot, once or twice weekly as extras. Fresh produce alone is not a complete diet.

Remove supplemental food before it spoils. Small protein-rich extras may be used sparingly, but excess protein and wet food foul a small colony quickly. Never replace the edible substrate with packaged treats.

Supplements

A small separate piece of cuttlebone or a little plain calcium carbonate can be offered. The optimum supplemental calcium dose is not established, and a calcium source cannot compensate for poor edible substrate. Routine reptile multivitamin or D3 dusting is not recommended.

Decor & Enrichment

Provide several stable hides, textured cover and sheltered travel routes that match the animal’s natural behavior. Secure heavy items, avoid sharp edges and exposed adhesive, and use pesticide-free materials. Leave usable space for movement, feeding and environmental choice.

Handling & Behavior

Handle briefly, with clean hands, close to the enclosure or a soft surface. Support the body and let the animal walk; never pull an animal out of its coil or excavate it for handling.

Defensive secretions can irritate skin and eyes or stain skin. Wash hands afterward, keep them away from eyes and mouth, and avoid contact for anyone with sensitivity. Falls can cause serious injury.

Cleaning & Routine Maintenance

Check moisture, temperature, fresh-food spoilage and the supply of edible leaves/wood regularly. Remove spoiled extras while preserving the established detritus substrate and buried refuges.

Replenish decomposing leaves and wood as consumed. Do not perform a deep full substrate change while animals may be molting underground. If contamination demands intervention, plan the transfer carefully and preserve safe moist chambers where possible.

Cohabitation

Same-species colonies are appropriate when edible substrate, moisture and space are sufficient. Mixed-sex colonies may reproduce. Avoid mixing species with different moisture needs or adding predatory/competitive cleanup animals without understanding their effects on eggs and molts.

Molting & Seasonal Changes

Buried animals may remain out of sight for weeks or longer. Molting is an extremely vulnerable period: leave chambers undisturbed and maintain safe deep moisture and temperature. Do not dig up an animal simply to confirm it is alive.

Surface activity can vary with environmental conditions. Reduced activity is not a reason to dry all soil, force-feed or repeatedly handle the animal. Review conditions if several animals show abnormal behavior or decline.

Reproduction

Mixed-sex colonies may lay eggs in the substrate and produce tiny offspring. Keep edible substrate and appropriate deep moisture available, use fine ventilation gaps and avoid deep stirring that destroys egg or molt chambers. Population growth may require additional space and food.

Common Health Concerns

- Dehydration or unsuitable edible substrate: review deep moisture and the ongoing leaf/wood supply; fresh fruit alone will not correct poor habitat.
- Failed molts or injury: do not disturb underground animals; avoid falls and hazardous sharp decor.
- Contamination: pesticide residues, treated wood and spoiled supplemental food can harm a colony. Persistent decline deserves advice from an experienced millipede keeper or an exotic veterinarian familiar with invertebrates.

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