Regal Jumping Spider Care Guide

Phidippus regius

Combine bright diffuse daytime light, safe drinking droplets, strong cross-ventilation and an undisturbed upper silk retreat. This guide covers Phidippus regius rather than every jumping-spider species or locality.

Species Profile

Common name: Regal Jumping Spider

Scientific name: *Phidippus regius*

Adult size: Females about 7-22 mm and males 6-18 mm body length; excludes legs

Average lifespan: 1-2 years

Native range: Southeastern United States and Caribbean

Habitat and activity: Diurnal visual hunter; elevated retreats in open/vegetated habitats

Diet: Cultured live flies and appropriately small insects

Care difficulty: Intermediate

Shopping List

- Escape-proof front-, side- or bottom-opening enclosure with fine cross-ventilation.
- Upper cork/branches/foliage and safe anchor points for silk retreats.
- Bright diffuse low-heat visible light and a timer; thermometer.
- Fine sprayer, cultured prey, long feeding tools and a small catch cup.

Housing

A furnished 4 × 4 × 8 in (10 × 10 × 20 cm; L × W × H) enclosure is a useful starting adult size; larger females may benefit from roughly 6 × 6 × 9 in (15 × 15 × 23 cm). Size for the individual's hunting ability, mobility and prey access. Very small spiderlings require appropriately scaled escape-proof rearing enclosures.

Choose an opening that protects the upper hammock. Provide fine cross-ventilation on opposing sides; check every gap against the spider's actual size. Larger space should still contain abundant upper cover and safe travel routes.

Lighting & UVB

Provide about 12 hours of bright diffuse visible light, followed by darkness. A cool white LED can support hunting without heating the small enclosure. Avoid direct sun through glass and very bright unshaded close lamps.

Jumping spiders can perceive ultraviolet wavelengths, but UV perception does not demonstrate a pet-care requirement for a UVB lamp. Routine reptile-style UVB is not part of this guide's recommendation.

Heating & Temperature

A useful daytime range is 72-80°F (22-27°C), with cooler sheltered areas and a modest night drop toward 68-74°F (20-23°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 or a strong basking lamp over a tiny spider enclosure. If the room is too cold, stabilizing the room is usually easier to control than heating a small enclosure directly.

Humidity & Ventilation

Roughly 50-70% with cross-ventilation and drying surfaces; locality/life stage matters. Treat readings as a starting pattern rather than a number to chase regardless of substrate, airflow or animal behavior.

Measure humidity in a representative occupied zone, away from a freshly sprayed surface. Provide sheltered moisture choices while retaining airflow. Persistent condensation, sour odor, flooded soil or surfaces that never dry indicate a setup problem. Ventilation and hydration must be adjusted together rather than simply sealing all vents.

Water & Hydration

Provide small drinking droplets on one wall or a few leaves. Light misting every 1-3 days is only a starting point; adjust to room conditions, locality, life stage and how rapidly surfaces dry. Check daily that hydration is accessible.

Avoid spraying the spider or silk retreat directly, filling the enclosure with large droplets, or soaking the substrate. Open water dishes are generally unnecessary for small individuals and can create hazards. Do not use honey or sugar water as a routine hydration or feeding substitute.

Substrate

Regal jumping spiders do not need deep substrate. A bare floor, paper towel, or a shallow layer of clean coco fiber/soil can all work. Simple floors make it easier to find waste, feeder insects, and fallen molts; a thin naturalistic substrate can buffer moisture but should never remain soggy.

Avoid sharp gravel, loose fibers that can entangle legs, pesticide-treated plant material, sticky tapes, exposed adhesive, and uncured paints/resins. Bioactive setups are possible, but for a single small spider they add complexity and can make prey and health monitoring harder.

Food & Feeding

P. regius is a generalist arthropod predator. Natural-history work records smaller immatures feeding heavily on flies and older spiders taking larger insects including orthopterans, hemipterans, and moths. In captivity, use clean cultured prey and rotate feeder types rather than relying on one insect for the spider's entire life.

Spiderlings and small juveniles: Drosophila melanogaster or D. hydei, offered every 1-2 days or according to abdomen size. Larger juveniles: larger flies, small roaches, or carefully sized crickets every 2-3 days. Adults: bottle flies, houseflies, small roaches, small crickets, or similar prey about every 4-7 days as a starting point. Feeding should ultimately follow body condition and activity, not a rigid calendar.

Choose prey the spider can overpower safely; when uncertain, choose smaller prey. Flies are excellent staples because they encourage natural visual hunting and are relatively low risk. Crickets and other biting feeders should be removed promptly if ignored, and no live prey should remain with a spider that is sealed into a molt hammock. Mealworms can be offered in moderation in a smooth feeding cup; waxworms are an occasional high-calorie treat, not a staple.

Gut-load feeder insects when practical. Routine calcium or reptile-vitamin dusting is not established as necessary for jumping spiders and is not recommended as a default. Never feed wild-caught insects because pesticide exposure, parasites, and defensive chemicals are unpredictable. Do not use honey, fruit, or sugar-water "boosts" as a substitute for appropriate prey and clean water.

Do not routinely dust spider prey with reptile calcium or vitamins. Use healthy cultured feeders. Adjust meals using abdomen condition and life stage; a distended abdomen and persistent prey refusal are reasons to reduce feeding or review the animal, not to add sugary supplements.

Decor & Enrichment

Decor should create routes and choices, not just fill space. Use cork, twigs, thin branches, textured vertical surfaces, foliage, and elevated ledges so the spider can stalk, jump, hide, and anchor silk. Leave open sight lines between some perches because visual hunting is a major part of normal behavior.

Provide more than one secure upper retreat location. As spiders age, their grip can weaken; add intermediate perches and foliage that reduce long fall distances. Every decoration should be firmly secured and free of sharp edges, exposed wire, sticky adhesive, or loose fibers.

Handling & Behavior

Handling is optional. Let the spider walk onto a clean hand or catch cup without pinching or pulling it from silk. Work low over a safe surface and stop if it repeatedly retreats or tries to escape. Avoid creams, pesticide residues and wet hands.

Never disturb a sealed molt retreat for handling. Older or poorly mobile spiders may need lower perches and easier hydration/prey access. Observe the individual rather than assuming every spider enjoys contact.

Cleaning & Routine Maintenance

Check hydration, temperature, abdomen condition and prey safety daily without opening a sealed hammock. Remove dangerous uneaten prey and clean accessible waste gently.

Clean around silk retreats rather than tearing them down on a schedule. Keep the enclosure and food culture away from aerosols, insecticides, flea/tick treatments, fragrances and contaminated plants; spiders are highly vulnerable to such exposures.

Cohabitation

Keep one spider per enclosure. Jumping spiders can injure or eat each other, and pet housing is not a group experiment. Breeding introductions require experienced supervision and separate secure enclosures.

Molting & Seasonal Changes

Before a molt, the spider may stop eating and seal a thick silk retreat. Remove potentially dangerous prey, provide hydration away from the nest and do not tear the hammock open.

Wait until the spider emerges and its mouthparts have hardened before offering prey again; duration depends on stage and individual. Adults do not molt again. A mature spider’s decline or egg-sac guarding should not automatically be labeled a molt.

Reproduction

Mature females can lay infertile sacs, and previously mated females may store sperm and produce several fertile sacs. Treat unknown-history mature females as potentially fertile. Do not open or disturb a guarded sac merely to check it; prepare containment and stage-appropriate food before spiderlings emerge.

Common Health Concerns

- Dehydration, a persistently shrunken abdomen or impaired movement: review drinking access, room heat and prey history.
- Molt injury: dangerous loose prey, low hydration or disturbance may contribute; do not force an extraction or manipulate soft limbs.
- Exposure to pesticides/aerosols: sudden widespread or neurological-looking changes require urgent expert advice. Keep contaminated material away.
- Persistent refusal plus weight/abdomen loss, injury or repeated unusual movement deserves experienced arachnid or invertebrate-veterinary assessment; do not diagnose every sign as old age.

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