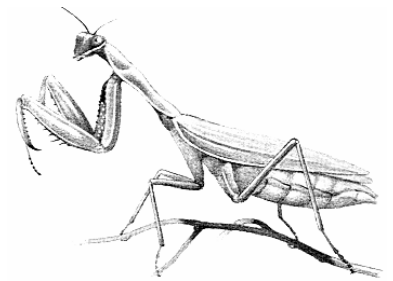


PRAISING MANTIS

“An excellent general predator”



WHO ARE THEY? WHAT DO THEY EAT?

This praying mantis species is endemic to North America, their Latin name is *Tenodera aridifolia sinensis*. They come from our continent, more specifically from South Carolina and the North USA.

They are general predators of pests and beneficials. They eat aphids, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, butterflies, caterpillars, etc. They are also cannibals, as soon as they emerge from the egg case (capsule containing eggs), they disperse.

Praying Mantis are very territorial and will devour anything that enters their territory. The size of prey increases as the Mantis grows. At hatching, they are about 1 cm (0.4 inches) in length and in adulthood they may reach 6.25 to 10 cm (2.5 to 4 inches).

Despite their massive size, it is extremely difficult to find Mantis among plants due to their color camouflage, and they can move very quickly. They hunt by ambush and will remain motionless until an insect passes in front of their spiny legs, then they will capture and devour.

BIOLOGY OF PRAISING MANTIS

The Mantis have 3 stages: adult, egg and larva.



EGG: In the fall, the females will lay 40 to 400 eggs in an egg case, which initially is a foamy grey envelope and once dried looks like a capsule of papier-mâché. Females can lay 1 to 4 egg cases which they attach to stems or branches. Eggs overwinter in the egg case.

LARVA: In spring, baby Mantis will emerge from the egg case in a short period of 1 to 2 hours. They will all emerge through the same opening. Upon their release, they are small, wet and brown to gray in colour. They dry quickly, fold out their antennae, anterior and posterior legs. When they are completely dry, they look like the adults, but they are smaller. The many larvae quickly disperse before being eaten by a brother or sister. Like most insects, several emerge but few survive.

ADULTS: The males fly more efficiently than females because they are lighter, a great advantage when seeking a partner for mating. The body of the male is sometimes eaten by the female and serves as a resource for development of the eggs.

EASY STEPS TO RELEASE THE MANTIS

1. Place the egg case outside when the temperature is a minimum of 15°C (58°F). Using the mesh bag, the egg case can be attached to a plant or shrub, 1 to 1.5 m (3 to 5 feet) above the ground. The egg case should be placed in a shady humid location. You can mist the egg case with water, but simply watering your plants is enough. Do not expose them to direct sunlight or completely immerse them.
2. Be patient for the emergence of Mantis; 2 to 8 weeks are needed. Upon hatching, the larva emerge from the same opening which does not cause any apparent change on the egg case. It is therefore difficult to distinguish an egg case that has hatched.
3. To observe the Mantis emerging, instead of placing the egg case outside, place it in a sealable white paper bag and place in a south facing window. Every day, check the contents and spray lightly with water on the paper bag. Once the Mantis emerge, release immediately outside to avoid cannibalism and disperse.

