Sand Scorpion

Urodacus armatus

Sand Scorpions are a small widespread species of desert scorpion that are often found alongside *Urodacus yaschenkoi*, their burrow entrances are similar in appearance but *U. armatus* a lot smaller in diameter and they also tend to frequently seal up and reopen their burrows which appears to help reduce water evaporation. Quite a different strategy to that of *U. yaschenkoi* which makes much deeper burrows and only seals them up during periods that it is less active.
This scorpion is variable in size from about 30 - 80mm much like *U. manicatus*. They are a sit and wait predator but quite often found roaming in numbers especially if you are black lighting on a warm night.

Like other scorpions within the *Urodacus* genus the Sand Scorpion has a mild venom it is similar in pain to that of the rest within the genus, they are quite alert and skittish just like *U. yaschenkoi* when disturbed they will defensively attack quickly flicking their tail sometime producing venom before even using its sting. Refer to Flinders Ranges care guide for pain description. Like all Australian scorpions they are not considered medically significant, though if symptoms get worse or concerning seek medical attention immediately!

Invertebrates including scorpions grow by shedding their exoskeleton this is known as ecdysis or moulting. Other invertebrates may continue to moult throughout their whole lives while *Urodacus* Scorpions will only moult a total number of 5 times throughout their whole lives, as follows: 1st instar(newborn), 2nd instar(4 weeks), 3rd instar(1year), 4th instar(2years), 5th instar(3years), 6th instar(4 years - Adult). they usually moult at night out of the way with less chance of being disturbed.

Maternal:

Urodacus scorpions have very long gestation periods, which can last from 12 - 18 months. This species gives live birth and if you do breed them or happen to have a wild caught gravid female give birth though then it's important that no food should be offered to mum and babies during this period.

Once they disperse only then should they be individually separated and fed a cricket leg each and mum fed up to regain nutrients. If they seem to disperse too early before they've moulted it could be that mum is losing moisture content so she is opting for her survival over maternal care. If this happens mist mums enclosure and just put all the babies in a separate one fully sealed and similar setting to that of the mums, do not offer them food until they moult to 2nd instar and darken.

Food:

Live prey weekly, although pre-killed prey may also be accepted.

Crickets and cockroaches are the best choice of feeder for pretty much all predatory invertebrates, but you can use other things like mealworms but they have more fatty content and are best spared for as a snack. They can handle large prey especially bigger size scorpions as they will overpower it with both their large claws and then also use venom from their sting to assist by paralysing the prey for them.

Water:

Keep the substrate misted and damp enough so that it holds humidity and can hold shape when you grab some in your hand. Your scorpion will drink by absorbing moisture from their substrate in through layers in their cuticle so they don't require a water bowl, regular misting of the enclosure and a good water gradient will be best so that the scorpion can self regulate as it pleases/needs.

Enclosure:

This species isn't heaps suited to captivity but for best results you should keep them in a ventilated false bottom setup. To do this you put some pebbles or small stone medium in the bottom at least about 4 cm with some type of tubing running down one of the corners that reaches the stones and comes right up to just under where the lid of the enclosure will sit, followed by a layer of washed play sand again the same at least 4 cm. Then add the main depth (minimum 15cm recommended) to the enclosure by adding in the actual substrate mix for the scorpion to burrow in the sand underneath will act as a drainage medium for the pebbles at the bottom so when you put water in the tube it can feed into the drainage pebble area and high ventilation lets it evaporate up through the substrate

as it drys. It is good to let the setup dry out completely for brief periods for best results.
About roughly a size of 30cm x 30cm is a good size but can get by with slightly smaller.

Substrate:
Mix peat moss with water till it clumps and holds but doesn't drip excess water out then mix through dry sand to a 50/50 ratio.

Temperature:
The best temperatures are 15 - 25°C, with 25°C being optimal.

Handling:
Like mentioned this is a very defensive and skittish species of scorpion, also known to produce venom from its sting when agitated before it even stings, if you attempt to handle them it's important to be very alert or you can be stung quite easily.