



Rail City Garden Center
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Praying Mantis Egg Cases

Praying Mantis (*Tenodera aridifolia sinensis*) are beautiful insects that have a voracious appetite. They help to control garden insect pests the organic way. They are strictly carnivorous and feed on almost any insect of a size it can overcome.

In the fall the females produce egg cases. She deposits the eggs in a frothy secretion that hardens to protect the eggs from predators and severe winter climates. The egg cases are attached to twigs, leaves, fences, etc. and may contain 50 to 400 eggs with an average of about 200. The egg cases are harvested and carefully checked to ensure that quality cases are selected for our customers.

Release Instructions: Attach the egg cases to a twig or plant about a foot or two off the ground where there is cover to protect the babies. When hatching, the young crawl from between tiny flaps in the cases and hang from silken threads about 2 inches below the case. After drying out, the long-legged young disperse into the vegetation leaving little, if any, evidence of their appearance. This happens within an hour or two and is very difficult to know hatching has occurred unless the elusive, well-camouflaged young are found. The egg case does not change in appearance in any way.

If you want to know approximately when the mantis have hatched, place the egg cases in a paper bag, fold the top and paper clip. Place the bag on a window sill in direct sunlight. Periodically open the bag carefully and, if already hatched, take outside and release. Be patient- sometimes it takes up to eight weeks of warm weather for them to hatch.