

THE ARACHNID LIBRARY

Below are the detailed results of arthropod book reviews with their rankings and comments. A key explaining the rankings is located at the end of the Arachnid Library.

Baxter, R. N. 1993. Keeping and breeding tarantulas. Chudleigh Publishing, Essex, England. 89 pp. 32 plates. B=8, C=6, D=8, E=9, F=8, G=10, H=9, N=7, O=N/A, P=9, R=9, S=N/A, T= **8.3**

Highly praised in its time, this book needs revision. It contains good information, but many scientific names are incorrect. Opinions about keeping various species are often erroneously expressed as fact, and many are outdated. It's still considered a good book by some.

Browning, J. G. 1989. Tarantulas. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, New Jersey. 96 pp. B=0, C=0, D=0, E=0, F=0, G=0, H=0, N=0, O=0, P=3, R=0, S=N/A, T= **0.3**

Coote, J. 1993 (Reprinted in 1996). Tarantulas: Their captive husbandry & reproduction. Practical Python Publications, Nottingham, UK. 68 pp. B=0, C=N/A, D=0, E=1, F=0, G=0, H=0, N=0, O=N/A, P=1, R=0, S=N/A, T= **0.2**

This book was a mistake made by, as with de Vosjoli, someone who is likely an outstanding amateur herpetologist. Any useful information is quickly cancelled out with seriously false statements such as spiderling die quickly if temperatures go much above 79°F and that tarantula venom is used to immobilize (okay) and digest (absolutely not) their prey. As with de Vosjoli, this book has doubtless killed a large number of tarantulas. The book provides another classic example of why authors should not write about subjects far outside their areas of expertise without a great deal of help from experts in those fields.

David, A. 1987. Tarantulas a complete introduction. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, New Jersey. 96 pp. B=0, C=0, D=0, E=0, F=0, G=0, H=0, N=0, O=0, P=3, R=0, S=N/A, T= **0.3**

de Vosjoli, P. 1991. Arachnomania, the general care and maintenance of tarantulas and scorpions. Advanced Vivarium Systems, Lakeside, California. 80 pp. B=4, C=6, D=7, E=2, F=5, G=7, H=8, N=0, O=N/A, P=6, R=2, S=N/A, T= **4.7**

This is the first significant book by a reptile and amphibian worker writing outside of his field with little or no apparent help. Although the housing and some other categories were good, this book has killed a lot of tarantulas and scorpions. The book should have been revised or made unavailable many years ago.

Frye, F. L. 1992. Captive invertebrates: A guide to their biology and husbandry. Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida. 135 pp. B=N/A, C=8, D=0, E=0, F=1, G=1, H=0, N=0, O=2, P=5, R=0, S=2, T= **1.7**

A veterinarian writing nearly exclusively from older literature assembled this book. Although some sections, such as the one on hermit crabs, may contain material of interest to a limited number of people, it missed the target for the arachnid enthusiasts.

Gurley, R. 1993 (1994 rev.). A color guide to tarantulas of the world I. Ada, Oklahoma. 42 pp. B=N/A, C=1, D=N/A, E=2, F=N/A, G=N/A, H=N/A, N=0, O=N/A, P=6, R=N/A, S=N/A, T= **2.3**

Gurley, R. 1995. A color guide to tarantulas of the world II. Ada, Oklahoma. 59 pp. B=0, C=1, D=N/A, E=0, F=0, G=N/A, H=N/A, N=0, O=N/A, P=4, R=N/A, S=N/A, T= **0.8**

Gurley's books could have been inexpensive, useful tools. Instead, he chose to shun both credible tarantula taxonomists and needed reviews by others knowledgeable in the field. As a result, many, if not most of the tarantula photographs are misidentified, and the advice below the photographs may or may not contain useful information.

Hancock, K. & J. Hancock. 1992. Tarantulas: Keeping and breeding arachnids in captivity. R & A Publishing Limited, Somerset, England. 147 pp. B=4, C=4, D=N/A, E=6, F=8, G=5, H=8, N=1, O=3, P=5, R=6, S=N/A, T= **5.0**

Klaas, P. 2001. Tarantulas in the vivarium: Habits, husbandry, and breeding. Krieger Publishing Co. Malabar, Florida. 140 pp. B=1, C=3, D=0, E=1, F=6, G=0, H=1, N=6, O=1, P=7, R=4, S=N/A, T= **2.7**

Lund, D. 1977. All about tarantulas. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, NJ. 96 pp.

This is one of, if not the first book written for tarantula enthusiasts and the general public. Still available in some pet stores, it is valuable for historical purposes.

Marshall, S. D. 1996 (2001). Tarantulas and other arachnids. Barron's, Hauppauge, New York. 104 pp. B=10, C=10, D=9, E=10, F=10, G=10, H=10, N=10, O=10, P=9, R=10, S=N/A, T= **9.8**

This is the best short version, inexpensive book for enthusiasts on tarantulas and other arachnids written by a professional arachnologist with a deep understanding of the needs of enthusiasts. The best long, more expensive version is Schultz & Schultz (1998), also by Barron's.

Polis, G. A. [Ed.]. 1990. The biology of scorpions. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California. 587 pp. B=10, C=10, D=N/A, E=10, F=10, G=N/A, H=N/A, N=10, O=N/A, P=10, R=10, S=10, T= **10.0**

Although written for scientists, not for enthusiasts, this is still the best reference book for scorpion enthusiasts. Tragically, Dr. Polis died in the summer of 2000 while only in his mid-fifties.

Preston-Mafham, K. 1998. Spiders: The new compact study guide and identifier. Chartwell Books, Edison, New Jersey. 80 pp. B=7, C=0, D=N/A, E=0, F=N/A, G=N/A, H=N/A, N=6, O=N/A, P=7, R=N/A, S=0, T= **3.3**

There is only one possible explanation as to why this book was published: The author needed money, so he tossed a few of his extra photographs together, scribbled some notes about them on paper, and conned a publishing house into printing it. This is unfortunate, since he coauthored a marvelous encyclopedia on arthropods earlier that should grace the libraries of all those interested in arthropods. The biology section is a repeat from another previous book, and the photographs have few species from either North America or Europe, presumably the intended marketplace for the book. Where the "identifier" part comes in is a complete mystery. Authors, especially those with heretofore-sparkling reputations, can do nothing but hurt themselves releasing a book like this one.

Rankin, W. & J. G. Walls. 1994. Tarantulas and scorpions: their care in captivity. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, New Jersey. 64 pp. B=1, C=0, D=0, E=1, F=1, G=1, H=3, N=0, O=0, P=8, R=1, S=N/A, T= **1.5**

Rubio, M. 2000. Scorpions: A complete pet owners manual. Barron's, Hauppauge, New York B=9, C=8.5, D=9.5, E=9.75, F=10, G=8.5, H=9.5, N=8, O=N/A, P=8, R=9, S=N/A, T= **9.0**

Brent Hendrixson and Dave Gaban rated this book, hence the point fractions in the categories.

Stoops, E. D. & J. L. Martin. 1995. Scorpions and venomous insects of the southwest. Golden West Publishers, Inc. Phoenix, Arizona. 108 pp. B=2, C=4, D=N/A, E=1, F=N/A, G=N/A, H=N/A, N=5, O=3, P=4, R=N/A, S=N/A, T= **3.2**

Tinter, A. 1997? (No publication date listed, no ISBN) Tarantulas today. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, New Jersey. 80 pp. B=2, C=0, D=0, E=3, F=2, G=2, H=2, N=4, O=N/A, P=9, R=3, S=N/A, T= **2.7**

Webb, A. 1992. The proper care of tarantulas. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, New Jersey. 288 pp. B=3, C=1, D=6, E=6, F=4, G=7, H=9, N=3, O=N/A, P=7, R=8, S=N/A, T= **5.4**

Webb, A. 1992. Scorpions: Keeping and breeding them in captivity. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Neptune City, New Jersey. 64 pp. B=0, C=N/A, D=N/A, E=2, F=1, G=3, H=0, N=1, O=3, P=3, R=3, S=0, T= **1.6**

Books listed in the arachnid library are rated by the editor (Webb's scorpion book was rated by Kari McWest) in separate categories with 0 = of little or no value in this category, to 10 = of greatest value, expertise or professionalism, or N/A = not applicable, or not appropriate. The system allows readers to choose what books they may want to buy according to categories important to them. The categories used include:

B= Biology; this rates the accuracy and comprehensiveness of biological information given in the book.

C= Citations; the quality and quantity of additional references cited or listed in the text.

D= Diseases, pests and injuries; comprehensiveness, appropriateness of treatments, etc.

E= Enthusiast use; rates how useful the book may be overall to an enthusiast or hobbyist.

F= Food; covers the comprehensiveness of suggested nutritional components and prey.

G= Growth of immatures; includes the comprehensiveness of food, housing for rearing spiderlings.

H= Habitat; includes safety in housing, convenience, cleverness, thoroughness, etc.

N= Names; rates the accuracy of scientific names claimed for the species given in the book.

O= Other arachnids; comprehensiveness, accuracy of all information on other arachnids.

P= Photographs; rates the quality and practical value of the photographs in the book.

R= Reproduction, breeding; covers the range of species discussed and usefulness of advice.

S= Science; rates how useful the book would be to a scientist (could it be cited).

T= Total; rating sum divided by the number of rating categories (N/A categories excluded); the overall rating of the book.

A low rating in some categories, for instance, biology, does not mean all the text has no value, but if a large enough portion of the text is incorrect or misleading, it is given a low rating because some enthusiasts may have great difficulty sorting out the accurate information from the bad.