

Sapphire Ornamental Tarantula (*Poecilotheria metallica*)



Diet: This tarantula primarily feeds on flying insects, but will also eat flightless insects and the occasional small mammal or lizard.

Habitat: This arboreal tarantula lives in the deciduous forests of central southern India. Its habitat is becoming increasingly degraded, and it is considered a critically endangered species because of this.

Predators: Weasels, hawks, owls, and snakes.

Behavior: : Ornaments lack the urticating hairs that new world tarantulas possess, so their main form of defense is to flee or to bite. The Indian Ornamental is extremely fast, but if it cannot escape a perceived threat it will bite with venom that can be potent enough that it could warrant a trip the emergency room. Bite symptoms can range from localized pain and joint stiffness accompanied by nausea to excruciating pain.

Lifespan: Females mature at the age of 5-7 years and live to about 12, while males mature at 18 months and live only 2-4 years.

Growth and Development: Both males and females reach 6-8 inches in leg span.

Endangered Status: This species is declining, therefore labeled *critically endangered* by IUCN.

Fun Fact: The lavender and dark blue colors on this tarantula help it camouflage with the lichen on the tree surfaces where it lives.