



BUTTERFLY PAVILION

Mexican Red-Rump Tarantula (*Brachypelma vagans*)



Country: Mexico and Guatemala

Habitat: Native to scrublands of southern and Southeastern Mexico and down into other parts of Central America, the Mexican red-rump tarantula is a terrestrial species that burrows underground. They have also been established as a non-native species to Florida.

Diet: Mexican red-rump feed on insects, frogs, mice, and even other spiders. Pretty much anything they can overpower.

Predators: Lizards, birds, snakes, or other large carnivores and/or insectivores.

Behavior: Mexican Red-rumps, like most terrestrial tarantulas, remain in their burrows and feed opportunistically when prey passes by. They are generally docile but can be quick to start.

Lifespan: Females of this species have been known to survive for 15 years or more.

Growth and Development: Once mature, the males will abandon their burrows in search of females and typically die soon after mating. Adult females have a leg span of approximately 6.5 inches, and males typically similarly sized or slightly smaller.

Endangered Status: The species number is declining but it is labeled as least concern on IUCN. However, the Mexican red-rump is listed under Appendix II of CITES to prevent illegal removal and international trade.

Fun Fact: The venom peptide GsMtx-4 is being investigated for the possible treatment of cardiac arrhythmia, muscular dystrophy and glioma. These tarantulas were also used in traditional medicines of the Ch'ol Maya people in southeastern Mexico; by medicine men killing the spider, and then crushing it into a powder to be mixed with other ingredients. The strained liquid was then drunk.