



BUTTERFLY PAVILION

Sapphire Ornamental Tarantula (*Poecilotheria metallica*)



Country: India

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.

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

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 Sapphire 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 can live to about 12, while males live only two to four years.

Growth and Development: Females can reach six Inches in leg span, and males are often smaller.

Endangered Status: This species is declining, therefore labeled *critically endangered* by IUCN. This is due to logging and deforestation, which is rapidly shrinking it's habitat.

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