

Betty the Giant Vinegaroon



Species

Giant Vinegaroon (Mastigoproctus giganteus)

Habitat

Arid, dry desert and scrubland of southern USA and Mexico.

Care

Betty lives in a 5-10 gallon tank with logs and plants for cover. The tank is misted daily to retain the correct humidity.

Food

Live crickets and locust.

Characteristics

Gentle and slow moving,

Why we love Betty

Betty may look a little scary but she's a gentle giant – and can squirt vinegar from her tail! How cool is that?

Read Betty's story on the next page...

Betty's story

As a giant vinegaroon, Betty can grow up to 15cm, which includes her whip like tail. This tail has given vinegaroons the nickname of whip scorpion, but they are not true scorpions. Unlike true scorpions, vinegaroons don't have a stinger in her tail. But are they arachnids, which puts them in the same family group as spiders and scorpions.

As with all arachnids, Betty has eight legs – six are used for movement while the two longer ones at the front are used to detect vibrations. Betty has eight eyes, but they are very weak so she uses her longer front legs to feel her way around.



Vinegaroons have an amazing ability. They are able to shoot a substance made of 85% acetic acid from the base of their tail. Acetic acid is the main component of vinegar, which is how they get their name. This ability is a great deterrent to any animal trying to eat Betty, but it doesn't have an impact on humans.

In fact, Betty is very gentle and will happily sit on an open hand. Her large claws at the front may look scary but she only uses them to help her hold and eat her prey.