Common Name: Emperor scorpion	**Scientific Name:** *Pandinus imperator*
Class: Arachnida **Order:** Scorpionida **Family:** Scorpionidae	**Feeding Type:** Carnivore **Statistics:** Body: 1 to 7 inches

DESCRIPTION: Scorpions are arthropods distinguished by striking features, such as large pedipalps with stout claws, and an abdomen divided into two portions; a broad, seven-segmented preabdomen, and a five-segmented posterior with a slender tail ending with a stinger. The flat and narrow body contains a greatly reduced body cavity with blood-filled spaces. The scorpion has jointed legs, bilateral symmetry growth by molting, the presence of specialized cuticular sense organs, eight legs, and a segmented abdominal tail. The emperor scorpion is black.

RANGE: Central Africa

HABITAT: The scorpion is a forest dweller and likes to form burrows. The climate must be a warm, sub-tropical or tropical environment. Scorpions are common inhabitants of weathered woodpiles, rock slides, and old pieces of fallen tree bark.

ADAPTATIONS: The tail of the scorpion is segmented so that it can reach out and strike quickly without the whole body moving. Scorpions molt to renew and heal worn and damaged exoskeleton. After a series of molts, the scorpion can even regrow body parts that have been broken off. Although most of their fluid intake comes from their prey, scorpions will readily drink from shallow containers of fresh water.

REPRODUCTION/GROWTH: Scorpions reach sexual maturity in 6 to 7 months. Gestation requires nearly one year. The young are born alive, rather than emerging from externally hatched eggs. Mating scorpions perform an interesting courtship dance called "promenade-a-deux." The male will grasp the female's pedipalps with his own, and lead her to a site suitable to deposit his spermatophore. Once there, he pulls her over the site where she will lower herself and transfer the sperm through her genital opening. A few months later, as birth nears, whitish masses appear under the intersegmental membrane. The young will collect themselves after birth onto the mother's back, where they will stay without feeding until their first molt, which takes place about one week after birth. The young will then scatter for feeding, at which time there is a high chance of cannibalism by the other young or mother.

However, emperor scorpion mothers actually perform some care for their young, as they will catch and crush crickets for the young to gather around for a communal feed. Young scorpions are at high risk to die during molting. The emperor young have a better survival rate, but lose out by having a higher molting mortality for older offspring. In the wild, the mother-young relationship can last from several months to years, with the young remaining in the family group as adults.

LONGEVITY: Between 5 and 8 years

PREY/PREDATOR: Prey to humans

Predator to insects, mice, and spiders

DIET: WILD: Insects, mice, and spiders
SZ: Mealworms and crickets

STATUS: It is common throughout its range despite humans' persecution.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Few scorpions are dangerous to humans, and ordinarily do not attack unless disturbed. The sting of a scorpion usually only causes swelling and pain, and can be cured with proper medical attention. Scorpions represent one of the oldest living groups of animals; scientists know they have been on the planet for the past 425 million years! They are in the same class as spiders. Generally, scorpions are fed once every other week. There has been evidence that an overly well-fed scorpion lives a shorter life than one that has been less well provided with food.

The emperor scorpion is recommended as the best candidate for possible handling. This is because of its docile manner, and the fact that consequences of its sting are often insignificant. Scorpions in general vary in toxicity, from the insignificant sting of the emperor, to the deadly sting of scorpions found mostly in Mexico. However, it is best to leave all of them alone.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
1. Cloudsley-thompson, J. L.. Spiders, Scorpions, Centipedes, and Mites. 2nd ed.

1968.
2. Levi, and Levi. Golden Guide Spiders and Their Kin. Golden Press. 1990.
3. Savory, T. H.. Arachnida. 2nd ed. 1977.
4. Vosjoli, Philippe de. Arachnomania-The General Care and Maintenance of Tarantulas and Scorpions. Andvanced Vivarium Systems. 1991.