

# Animal Care Club News Letter

Issue 3, July 2020

## News

Before we start I have some sad news to share. Last week we had to say goodbye to pebbles the corn snake. She was a rescue from the RSPCA so we suspect she may be an older snake. It was a pleasure to have had her for her final 6 months of her life.



Fig 1. Pebbles taking a bath.

Of course with all darkness we can find some light. I now have a vacancy to take on a new animal when we are back in September.

## Stick insects

In this issue the Indian Stick insects are the focus. I got these as part of the sustainability plan.

With the view to feeding the bearded dragon a more varied diet.

The children quickly became fascinated and enjoyed interacting with them.



Fig 2. Adult Stick Insect

## General Care

Stick insects like to live in an airy home with a small amount of moisture. They are herbivores (only eat vegetation) feeding mainly on ivy, privet, roses or brambles. I have now become very skilled at pruning plants for food!

Over time they grew and we discussed how they shed their skin so that they could grow.

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## Breeding

It is unusual to find a male stick insect in captivity. But females can lay eggs that will still develop and hatch as nymph (baby) stick insects. This is parthenogenetic reproduction.

When they are mature they can lay 2-3 eggs a day. So one stick insect can lay 60-90 a month. I had 15 adults at one point!!

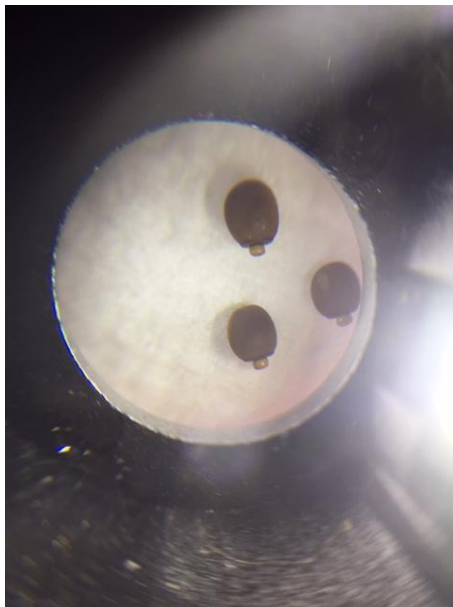


Fig 3. 3 Stick insect ova(eggs)

The eggs look like tiny seeds. These little creatures really have adapted so perfectly for where they live in the wild.

the eggs can take up to 4 months to hatch. Each month I collected all the eggs in a small tub with holes in and waited.

With the warm weather the first stick hatched in June!



Fig 4. Nymphs less than 2 days old.

I have now had a steady flow every day and am setting up several nursery enclosures!

They are being looked after, some getting new homes, some for succession planning as they only live for 6-12 months, and some will of course will have other uses.

I can also feed the goldfish the eggs as a treat, and to keep the numbers down.

**FUN FACT**, When frightened stick insects bring their legs close to their bodies and pretend to be a stick.

## Coming In The Next Issue

- All about the lizard and gecko