Arizona Blonde Tarantula

Aphonopelma chalcodes

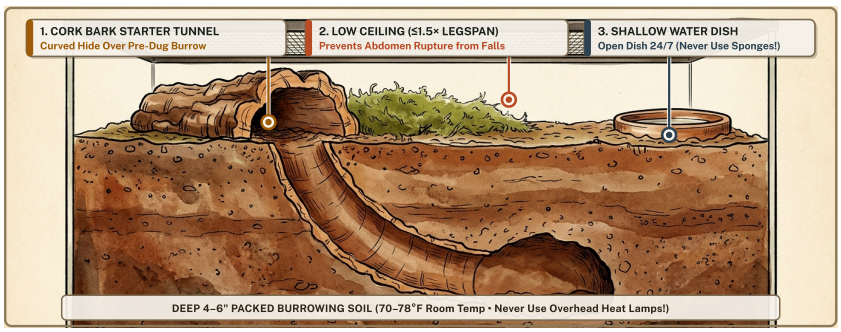
The Quick Version: With a champagne-gold head shield, fuzzy blonde legs, and the chillest personality in the spider world, the Arizona Blonde is one of our absolute favorite beginner tarantulas! Native to the Sonoran Desert, they want **dry, firmly packed dirt**, an open water dish, and zero fuss — and females can live 25+ years!



LIFESPAN	LEGSPAN	ACTIVE HOURS	ADULT TANK	DIET
F: 20–30y! • M: 7–10y	4–5.5 Inches	Dusk & Night	5–10 Gal Dry Setup	Crickets, Roaches, Worms

1. Dry Packed Desert Soil & Low-Ceiling Safety

4–6" OF FIRMLY PACKED DRY SOIL + OPEN WATER DISH + MAX 1.5× LEGSPAN FALL HEIGHT!



Daytime Room Temp — 72°–82°F
Normal warm room temps (no heat lamps!)

Dry Packed Floor — Dry Soil
Press the soil down firm & let it dry out!

Keep It Desert-Dry! — 40–55% RH
40–55% room air; just overflow water dish 1×/month

Open Water Dish 24/7 — Fresh Water
Even desert spiders need a full water dish!

Nighttime Temp Drop — 65°–72°F
Totally fine down to 65°F at night

2. Two Ways That Work — Pick What Fits Your Home

SHORT & SWEET: BOTH OPTIONS WORK GREAT

Flooring: Firmly Packed Dry Soil vs. Desert Clay Mix

Arizona Blondes hate walking on soggy, fluffy mud — they want firm, dry ground under their feet:

OPTION A: 4–6" OF REPTILE / INVERT SOIL PACKED DOWN FIRM
Pack the dirt down like a brownie pan when you set up the tank and let it dry; only the tiny spot right under the water dish needs a splash of moisture.

OPTION B: REPTILE SOIL + DESERT BURROWING CLAY / SAND MIX
Holds sturdy desert tunnels without caving in when your spider decides to redecorate its cave!

Lid Safety: Acrylic Vents vs. Wire Screen

Heavy terrestrial spiders have tiny claws on their feet that can snag like Velcro in cheap window-screen mesh:

OPTION A: ACRYLIC TERRESTRIAL ENCLOSURE WITH DRILLED VENTS
Smooth roof with zero wire mesh for toes to get stuck in.

OPTION B: 5- TO 10-GAL TANK FILLED HALFWAY UP WITH SOIL
Packing 4–6" of dirt in the bottom keeps the ceiling only 5" above the floor so your spider can never take a dangerous fall!

The Famous Arizona Blonde 'Winter Hunger Strike'

Because they evolved for lean Sonoran Desert winters, Arizona Blondes have the slowest metabolism imaginable:

OPTION A: DON'T PANIC IF THEY FAST FOR MONTHS!
A healthy, plump Arizona Blonde may seal its cave door with silk and skip food for 2 to 6 months in winter without losing any weight — just keep the water dish full!

OPTION B: SIDE-MOUNTED MICRO HEAT MAT ON THERMOSTAT (76–78°F)
Only needed if your house stays cold (<65°F) and you want to keep them awake in winter.

Flip Over for Page 2: Feeding Schedule, Team Tips & Grab-and-Go Checklist →

3. Feeding Guide (Slow & Steady Desert Appetite)

FEED ADULTS EVERY 10–14 DAYS • ALWAYS PULL UNEATEN CRICKETS OUT AFTER 24 HOURS!

Juveniles (<2.5") Every 5–7 Days	**1–2 Small Crickets, Small Dubia Roaches, or Mealworms:** Young Arizona Blondes grow super slowly — enjoy every molt!
Adults (4–5.5") Every 10–14 Days	**2–3 Large Crickets or 1–2 Medium Dubia Roaches:** Keep their booty about the same size (up to 1.25×) as their gold head shield.
Pre-Molt / Winter Fast Water Dish Only	**Shiny Dark Booty or Sealed Burrow:** Stop offering bugs! Wait 7–10 days after they finish molting before feeding again.

Favorite Desert Spider Bugs:

- **Live Dubia Roaches** — Awesome staple — won't bite or annoy a resting spider
- **Banded Crickets** — Great hunters — pull uneaten crickets out after 24 hrs!
- **Mealworms & Superworms** — Crush the worm's head first so it can't dig into the dirt
- **Zero Yard Bugs!** — Wild grasshoppers & beetles carry fatal lawn sprays

No Calcium Powder on Spider Bugs! Unlike geckos, tarantulas don't use reptile calcium or D3 powder — just feed your crickets and roaches a slice of carrot or squash before dinner.

4. Tips, Tricks & Big No-Nos from Our Reptile Team

REAL-WORLD HABITS THAT KEEP THEM THRIVING

Don't Mist the Tank!

Spraying a desert Arizona Blonde with a water bottle stresses them out! Keep 90% of the dirt dry and just let their water dish overflow a splash once a month.

Upside-Down = Molting!

If you walk in and see your spider flat on its back, pop the champagne — it's molting, NOT dead! Don't touch it and wait a full week afterward before feeding.

Itchy Belly Bristles

Even though Arizona Blondes are super docile, they still have itchy 'urticating hairs' on their abdomen. Wash hands after tank work and don't rub your eyes!

A 25-Year Best Friend!

Female Arizona Blondes are one of the longest-living invertebrates on earth — they'll happily hang out on your desk for 20 to 30 years!

5. Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

ASK US ON THE FLOOR — WE'LL HELP YOU MATCH EVERYTHING!

ARID BURROWING TANK & DIRT

- [ ] 5.5–10 Gal Terrarium or Acrylic Terrestrial Tarantula Enclosure
- [ ] Reptile / Invertebrate Soil + Burrowing Clay/Sand (4–6" deep!)
- [ ] Half-Log or Curved Cork Bark Cave (Starter Burrow)

WATER DISH & TOOLS

- [ ] Shallow Resin Water Dish (Skip sponges!) + Dechlorinator
- [ ] 10-Inch Feeding Tongs & Soft Paintbrush
- [ ] Digital Thermometer / Hygrometer

LIVE FEEDER BUGS

- [ ] Live Dubia Roaches, Crickets, or Mealworms
- [ ] Bug Gut-Load Chow (for feeding the crickets/roaches)

A Quick Note from Our Team — Keep Learning & Ask Us Anytime!

The quick version: there's more than one right way to set up a great enclosure! As long as your temperatures, humidity, and diet are dialed in, your pet doesn't care whether its cave is fancy resin or a terra-cotta pot. Bringing home this critter is a **20–30 year commitment (females)** — use these two pages as your home-base cheat sheet, watch what your pet tells you with their daily behavior, find a good local exotic vet, and call or stop by the shop anytime you have questions!

MY ARIZONA BLONDE'S INFO

Name / Morph: _____

Current Diet: _____

Date Adopted: _____