

REPTILIA

We Specialize in Small Animals and Reptiles



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CRESTED GECKO CARE

The Crested gecko originates from the islands of New Caledonia where the species was believed to be extinct until 1994 when it was subsequently rediscovered. In its natural environment, it can be found resting in rainforests, sleeping in trunk hollows or leaf litter, and only becomes active at night. Similar to other geckos, it can shed its tail as a defense mechanism (autotomy), but unlike others it lacks an ability to regenerate the tail, so care should be taken while handling. Geckos may live 10-15 years if looked after correctly.

HOUSING

- As large a vivarium as possible should be provided to enable room for exercise, and a thermal gradient to be created along the length of the tank (hot to cold). Wooden or glass vivarium are ideal as this provides the lizard with some visual security and ventilation can be provided at lizard level.
- Good ventilation is required and additional ventilation holes may need to be created.
- Hides are required to provide some security. Artificial plants, cardboard boxes, plant pots, logs or commercially available hides can be used. They should be placed both at the warm and cooler ends of the tank. One hide should contain damp moss, kitchen towel or vermiculite to provide a humid environment for shedding.
- Substrates suitable for housing Crested Geckos include fine reptile sand, AstroTurf, carpets, Sphagnum moss and some of the commercially available substrates. It is important that the substrates either cannot be swallowed, or if they are, do not cause blockages as this can prove fatal. Wood chip-based or corncob substrates should never be used for this reason.
- The vivarium should be cleaned out at least once a week with F10 disinfectant or similar disinfectant and spot cleaned daily to help prevent diseases.

TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY

- Reptiles are ectothermic so a heat source is required.
- Temperatures must be measured to ensure the tank is not overheating especially in a small vivarium. The cool end should be maintained at 23°C, and the warm end should be maintained at 26°C and not exceed 28°C.
- Belly heat can be provided with a heat mat or heat pad (bellow the substrate or AstroTurf). This should be set on a thermostat so that the overnight temperature does not drop below 23°C.

- Temperatures should be measured with a maximum/minimum thermometer. During the cold winter months careful checking is required to ensure the heat sources are keeping the tank sufficiently warm. Heat sources should be guarded to prevent thermal burns.
- Humidity should be checked with a hygrometer and kept moderately high by spraying at regular intervals.

COMPANIONS

- In general, the happiest lizard is the solitary lizard. Adults may be maintained in pairs or a harem if breeding is desired.

WHAT TO FEED

- Crested geckos are omnivores so will eat both live food and vegetables.
- They may be fed invertebrate prey such as crickets, black crickets and locusts once or twice per week. Mealworms should only be given in moderation. Waxworms should only be given as occasional treats.
- Live food should be gut loaded with a high calcium content supplement (8% of calcium in the dry matter) and many products are commercially available. It is worth checking the label for the calcium content. Live food should also be dusted with a high calcium balancer with little or no phosphorous content. Live food should be fed immediately after dusting and removed if not eaten within 30 minutes.
- A mix of fruit items and dark leafy salad vegetables may also be offered daily. Some keepers report success with the use of baby foods and specially formulated commercial diets, but care should be taken to check the vitamin and mineral contents of these foods.
- The market now offers a special formulated Crested Gecko foods, in various flavors available at Reptilia.
- Water should always be available and a container is required which will allow the lizard to submerge completely. This should be changed daily. Regular bathing may also be enjoyed.

SALMONELLA

- All reptiles can potentially carry Salmonella.
- However, it is rarely a cause of illness in reptiles and treatment is not required.
- It can be transmitted to people (especially young children or those who are immuno-compromised) so good hygiene after handling the reptile is important. Generally washing your hands in soap is sufficient. There are commercially available disinfectants that can be used as an alternative.

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

We recommend annual health checks every year for pet as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage.