

REPTILIA

We Specialize in Small Animals and Reptiles



Reptilia Marketing PTY(LTD)

107 Piet Retief Blvd Vanderbijlpark

016 982 3064

reptiliavdbp@gmail.com

@Reptilia.co.za

www.reptilia.co.za

GREEN IGUANA CARE

Iguana is a genus of herbivorous lizards that are native to tropical areas of Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Iguanas are among the most popular pet reptiles. They love to bask in the sun or under an ultraviolet light, and they enjoy a diet of leafy greens and vegetables. Many people don't realize that iguanas can grow to be quite large, exceeding 1.8 m in length. Iguanas should be properly socialized when they are young to ensure that they can be handled as adults. They require specialized housing and regular veterinary care and may not be a suitable pet for everyone.

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 cage (hot to cold). Horizontal space is important for this arboreal species so vivarium should be wider than they are tall.
- Good ventilation is required, and additional ventilation holes may need to be created.
- Green iguanas prefer basking on suspended branches, so provide plenty of them. They should be placed both at the warm and cooler ends.
- Substrates suitable for housing Green Iguanas include Astroturf, carpets and some of the commercially available substrates. DO NOT use shavings, gravel, crushed corn cob, kitty litter, wood shavings, or potting soil that contains vermiculite, pesticides, fertilizer, or wetting agents. In particular, avoid Calcsand. Although this is commonly sold as safe for reptiles it can cause eye problems and intestinal blockages. Sand easily sticks to food and so can be ingested, building up in the intestines, particularly in young iguanas and so is not recommended.
- The vivarium should be cleaned out at least once a week with a suitable disinfectant and spot cleaned daily to help prevent disease.
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TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY

- Reptiles are ectothermic, so a heat source is required.
- Typically, a spot area is created using a spot bulb, providing a basking temperature of 35°C. This should be kept on all day. Temperatures must be measured to ensure the tank is not overheating especially in

a small vivarium. The cool end should be maintained at 27°C, and the warm end should be maintained at 33°C and not exceed 35°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 cage sufficiently warm. Heat sources should be guarded to prevent thermal burns.

LIGHTING

- Iguanas must be exposed to UVB light.
- Alternatively, other UVB bulbs are available (please ask for further information on UV light in reptiles)
- All UVB bulbs should be checked regularly for their UV output and should be changed at least as frequently as manufacturer's instructions.
- Visible white light, in addition to heat, incandescent bulbs also provide visible white light. A combination of fluorescent and incandescent light fixtures can be used to provide visible light to all areas of the enclosure.
- Use a halogen flood light to achieve these temperatures (not a spot light, which has a beam that is too concentrated).

WHAT TO FEED

- Green iguanas are omnivorous in the wild, which means they consume both plant and animal matter. In essence, they are opportunistic feeders.
- The diet you offer your Green iguana should be primarily vegetable based (80% or so), some non-acidic fruit (10%) and some protein (10%). Avoid diets that include softened dog food or store-bought pellets.
- Dust all foods with vitamin and calcium supplements (with vitamin D3), as Iguanas grow quickly and require considerable nutrition to do so in a healthy manner.
- Collard greens, Dandelion greens, strawberries, figs, tomatoes, endive, kale, and carrots make very nutritious meals.
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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 reptiles as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage.

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