

REPTILIA

We Specialize in Small Animals and Reptiles



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VEILED CHAMELEO CARE

The Veiled or Yemen chameleon originates, as its name would suggest, from Yemen and Saudi Arabia. In its natural environment it spends most of its time in trees or bushes and will feel most secure when perching at a height. This is one of the larger chameleons, and probably the easiest species to keep, although all chameleons are high maintenance pets and not suitable for first time reptile keepers. They can live for 4-7 years in captivity.

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). Vertical space is important for this arboreal species so vivarium should be taller than they are wide. Mesh sided vivarium are ideal as this provides the Chameleon with some visual security and good ventilation can be provided which is especially important for these Chameleons.
- 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.
- Substrates suitable for housing Veiled Chameleons include Astroturf, carpets 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 25°C, and the warm end should be maintained at 28°C and not exceed 30°C.
- Belly heat can be provided with a heat mat or heat pad (below the substrate or AstroTurf). This should be set on a thermostat so that the overnight temperature does not drop below 25°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 or fogging the enclosure at regular intervals.

COMPANIONS

- In general the happiest Chameleon is the solitary Chameleon. Adults can be maintained in pairs if breeding is desired.

LIGHTING

- Chameleons must be exposed to UVB light.
- The best sources are the mercury vapor lamps which give out heat as well. This will need to be on all day for 8 hours and at an appropriate distance from the lizard as recommended by the manufacturer. A small branch or rock can be placed below the basking site. Care should be taken using mercury vapor bulbs in a small vivarium as temperatures may become too high and these lamps cannot be fitted to a thermostat.
- Alternatively, other UV-b 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 every 10-12 months.

WHAT TO FEED

- Chameleons are insectivores although may take the occasional piece of plant matter.
- Invertebrate prey such as crickets, black crickets and locusts should form most of the diet. Mealworms should be given in moderation and waxworms should only be given as occasional treats. Dark leafy vegetables may be offered but are often not eaten.
- 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.
- Water should always be available, and a container is required which will allow the Chameleon to submerge completely. This should be changed daily. Chameleons do, however, primarily obtain their water from droplets on plants so regular spraying is also important.

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.