

Crested Gecko; *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*



Adult size: 20 - 25cm (8 -10 inches)

Origin: New Caledonia

Temperature: 24°C daytime and 15°C night time

Longevity: 10 - 15 years

The crested Gecko are a popular species of the arboreal gecko, they have good temperaments. They are of a manageable size reaching up to 8-10

inches (20 – 25cm) and make interesting pets.

Housing

Crested geckos are arboreal species which require taller vivarium's. They also require higher humidity levels which make glass or plastic vivarium more suitable than wooden ones. Single crested gecko can live comfortably in a 30 x 30 x 45 Cm (12"x12"x18") vivarium. Two can be housed in a 45 x 45 x 60 Cm (18"x18"x24") or three (1 Male & 2 Females) in a 60 x 45 x 60 Cm (24"x18"x24") though there is no harm in giving them extra space. Although crested geckos can be housed in groups as hatchlings and juveniles, problems can occur as they mature. Signal males could be housed with groups of females, however males will fight for tertiary and this can result in injuries or worst case result in death. Adult males should not be housed together.

Substrate

There are many different types of substrate to choose from with this species coming from rainforest areas. A moisture retentive substrate would be best such as coconut fibre or plantation soil. This hold moisture therefore maintaining humidity with the vivarium. Also they are similar to the crested geckos natural environment.

Décor

Décor such as plants, cork bark and oak branches are a good way to provide your Crested Geckos with security that has places for them to hide so they feel safe within their environment. There are many ways to create the perfect environment with décor. Some people prefer to use plastic or silk plants as they can be fixed to the side of the terrarium and hang down. There is a large selection of plants on the market or you can choose live plants that are non-poisonous to decorate the vivarium.

Temperature and Lighting

The temperature of the enclosure should be at 24°C daytime and can drop as low as 15°C night-time, a lot of people keep their crested gecko without any heating due to their homes being at the correct temperature from their central heating. For People whose homes are cooler it is advised that they use a heat mat to supply the required warmth. The temperature should be monitored by the aid of a thermometer and a thermostat to control the heat-mat to stop any overheating which could harm the animal

Crested geckos a crepuscular species meaning they are active at dawn and dusk. They require a UV-A & UV-B lighting this not only provides them with a day to night cycle it also aids with calcium absorption. We advise a minimum of a 5% UV bulb, if the UV is being passed through mesh we would advise a higher percentage UV bulb.

UV-B is important to most animals as it helps them to produce pre-vitamin D which is turned into Vitamin D3, essential vitamins and hormones. This is needed for strong bones and healthy internal organs.

Handling

Crested Geckos are becoming a more popular species due to them being easy to handle and having a very good temperament. They enjoy being allowed to jump as it is a part of the way they do naturally. You can tell when they are planning to jump as they tend to bring their back feet up towards their front legs and then they will most likely jump within a few seconds. Young Children should be supervised as crested geckos like many other species of gecko can 'drop their tail' when they feel their life is in danger. Unlike other species a crested geckos tail will not regenerate (grow back). So care must be taken not to trap, pull, or pick the animal up by the tail as the tail is needed to help with balance. However, Crested geckos adapt well if the tail is lost. Adult crested geckos are usually calm to handle with the occasional jump as they are more relaxed, this is down to individuals as every animal is different on the way they act and this does also depend on how much they are handled as babies.

Diet

Crested Geckos diet is built up of insects, fruit and nectar in the wild. Captive crested geckos will feed on insects such as crickets, locust and mealworms. Wax worms can be given however this should be more as a treat due to their high fat content. There are also complete diets available, these are powders that is mixed with water to a paste and placed in a shallow dish for the animals to lap. You can also feed fresh fruits e.g. banana, pear, papaya. Calcium supplements should also be provided.

Humidity

Humidity can be achieved by misting the enclosure a few times a day this can be either with a spray bottle or an automatic spraying system both maintain good humidity levels. The level of humidity should be maintained around 70 -80 %. Crested geckos will also drink the water droplets from the side of the terrarium or décor. Providing a water bowl is always good practice just as sometimes crested geckos may walk along the floor of the terrarium.