



## Leopard Gecko; *Eublepharis macularius*

**Adult size:** 8-9"

**Origin;** Areas within Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and India.

**Temperature;** 31°C to 22°C (88°F to 74°F)

**Longevity:** 10-15 years (non-giants)

Leopard Geckos are found in semi-arid desert areas, the terrain is sandy, gravel and rocky. With hard clay soil, sparse amounts of vegetation made up of grasses and low shrubs.

### Housing

The size of the vivarium will vary depending on the number of Leopard Geckos which are being housed. One can live in a 60 x 30 x 30cm (24" x 12" x 12") vivarium. Two Leopard Geckos can be housed in a 60 x 45 x 45cm (24" x 18" x 18") vivarium, although there is really no harm in giving them plenty of extra space. Hatchling and juvenile Leopard Geckos can be housed in groups until they are sexually mature, at this point the males will need to be housed separately as they will fight with one another. Females can be kept together but if housed in groups plenty of food has to be available otherwise they may fight. When housing adults bear in mind that males are territorial and will fight, this could lead to serious injury or possible death.

### Substrate

There are a number of different substrate available for use with Leopard Geckos, some care should be taken as problems can arise as loose substrates can be ingested. This can lead to problems like impaction, this is where a blockage forms within the digestion tract and prevents bowel movements. This is more common in hatchlings and juveniles but can still happen in adults. The best substrate to prevent this is newspaper or paper towel, although this is not always as appealing as a more natural substrate such as sand which is more commonly used with adult Leopard Geckos.

### Décor

This is an area of real personal preference, just bear in mind that your Leopard Gecko is a nocturnal species so providing plenty of hides will help make it feel more secure. Providing a moss box or damp hide really helps when your Leopard Gecko is shedding. Items commonly seen in Leopard Gecko vivarium's are; Natural wood, cork bark, slate and pebbles. Live plants are not really advisable as Leopard Geckos will normally up root them, plus if there is any uneaten live food in the vivarium it may eat any live plants.

### Temperature and Lighting

Leopard Geckos cannot make their own body heat, so they rely on their environment by basking under a heat source to warm up or moving away from the heat source to cool down. Heat is required not only for them to keep warm but it is critical for their digestion. Too high or too low of a temperature can cause a loss of appetite, a weakened immune system, slower growth rate and possible health problems.

Leopard Geckos require an optimum day time air temperature of 29°C to 31°C (84°F to 88°F) with a night time temperature of 22°C to 25°C (74°F to 78°F). One of the best way to achieve this is using a low wattage ceramic heat bulb attached to a thermostat so that the temperature can be controlled. Or a heat mat attached to a thermostat. There are lots of different thermostats on the market so make sure you have the right style for your heating equipment. The best way to check that your heating equipment is holding the temperatures is by using thermometers at different points within the

vivarium. Any heat bulb should have a guard fitted to prevent your Leopard Gecko coming in contact with the bulb.

Leopard Geckos are nocturnal, naturally they would only come in contact with very low levels of UV and therefore it is not essential for calcium absorption. However, a UV-B bulb can be used to provide a day/night cycle.

## Diet

Leopard Geckos are insectivores. Insects should be dusted with a calcium powder. Insects that Leopard Geckos will eat are; Crickets, Locusts, Mealworms. By feeding your live food on fresh vegetables and vitamin supplements a day or two before you feed them to your Leopard Gecko, the live food will contain the maximum amount of nutrients that your Leopard Gecko will require to help it stay strong and healthy, especially when young or for laying females.

Wax worms can make a great occasional treat, wax worms are not best a use as a primary food as they are fatty, which can lead to your Leopard Gecko becoming over weight.

## Water

Leopard geckos originate from a naturally dry environment. However, water bowl should always be provided and refreshed daily.