

BRISTOL REPTILE EMPORIUM



Yemen Chameleon; *Chamaeleo calyptraus*



Adult size; Males 46 to 60cm (18 to 24")
Females 30 to 46cm (12 to 18")

Origin; Yemen, United Arab Emirates and southern Saudi Arabia

Temperature; 23°C to 35°C (75°F to 94°F)

Longevity; Males 5 to 7 years Females 2 to 4 years

Yemen chameleons are found in a range of different terrain, they spend almost all of their time in the canopy. The design of their body allows them to blend in to the foliage, waiting to ambush insects.

Housing

When it comes to housing a Yemen they require a high level of ventilation, most arboreal vivariums are now designed with plenty of vents. There are a number of different materials which vivariums can be made from; wooden or melamine, mesh and glass. Each of which have their advantages and disadvantages:

- Mesh enclosures provide great ventilation, however it can be difficult to maintain heat and humidity levels.
- Wooden or melamine vivariums help maintain both heat and humidity; however can require being replaced more frequently if not sealed correctly.
- Glass terrariums are good at maintaining humidity and rarely need to be replaced. Glass terrarium can be harder to maintain temperature levels.

Yemen's Chameleons are solitary animals and it is not uncommon for them to fight if they come in contact with each other, due to this they need to be housed singly.

A suitable size enclosure for an adult Yemen's would be 90 x 60 x 90cm (36 x 24 x 36") however there is no harm in providing extra space.

Substrate

There are a number of different substrate available for use with chameleons, some care should be taken as problems can occur as loose substrates could be ingested, this can then lead to problems like impaction. Impaction is where a blockage forms within the digestion tract and prevents bowel movements, however 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 Orchid bark or coconut fibre, more commonly used with adult chameleons.

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Heating and lighting

Chameleons 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 also critical for their digestion. Too high or too low of a temperature can cause a loss of appetite, a weakened immune system, slower growth rates and possible health problems.

Yemen's should have a basking area of 32°C to 35°C (90°F to 95°F) with a gradient of 23°C (75°F) at the cool end. One of the best ways to achieve this is using a ceramic heat bulb attached to a thermostat so that the temperature can be controlled. There are many different thermostats on the market, it is worth checking you have the right style for your bulb. The best way to check your heating equipment is holding temperature is by using thermometers at different points within the vivarium. Any heat bulb should have a guard fitted to prevent your Yemen's coming in contact with the bulb.

Yemen's require both UV-A and UV-B light nurturance, this can be achieved in a number of different ways e.g. T8 strip bulb. Providing this light source allows your chameleon to synthesize vitamin D3, which in turn allows them to absorb calcium. Chameleons require 12 to 14 hours of light per day.

Decor

This is an area of real personal preference, just bear in mind Yemen's spend all of their time in the canopy so it is essential that you provide them with lots of climbing material. Vines, branches and cork bark is great for this. They also like cover, both plastic and live plants are suitable. Take care when selecting live plants, although your chameleon is unlikely to eat them the insects which the chameleon feed off may. One way of reducing this is to gut load live food before feeding.

Diet

Yemen's primarily feed off insects, however they occasionally feed off vegetable matter as well. This is mostly leafy greens items like watercress and spring greens.

All insect food should be dusted with a calcium powder. Insects that are commonly fed are; Crickets, Locusts and Mealworms. Feed your live food on fresh vegetables and vitamin supplements a day or two before you feed them to your chameleon, the live food will contain the maximum amount of nutrients and calcium that your chameleon requires to 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 chameleon becoming over weight.

Water

Due to Yemen's spending their time in the canopy, they would rarely come in contact with standing water, which is why it is rare for them to drink from a water bowl. Naturally they would lick dew and rain from leaves. Drip systems are commonly used to provide water for chameleons, or alternatively simply misting the enclosure will allow the chameleon to drink from the water drops.