



## **Crested Geckos**

Crested Geckos are becoming very popular pets, they are easy to care for and interesting to observe.

### **Selecting Your Gecko**

When purchasing a Crested Gecko it is worthwhile going to a reputable reptile shop or breeder. They will be only too happy to let you see the selection of geckos they have available. The gecko should be confident with handling although hatchlings are often jumpy at first and will take a minute or two to settle down. They should have bright and clean eyes. If the gecko's tail is missing, it is worth noting that this will not grow back as it would with other gecko species.

### **Housing**

Crested geckos require higher humidity and lower temperatures than most commonly kept reptile species, so a glass terrarium is a great choice for them. We recommend using a terrarium measuring 45 x 45 x 60cm (18 x 18 x 24"), this is a tall terrarium which suits their arboreal (tree climbing) life style. See our Crested Gecko Setup

### **Substrate & Decor:**

Coconut fibre substrates such as Zoo Med Eco Earth and Lucky Reptile Humus Brick are ideal for Crested Geckos as this can be kept moist (which helps keep the humidity high) without the substrate growing mold. As these geckos are nocturnal, it is important to provide cover for hiding behind during the day. Plastic and silk plants are great for this. Wood can also be provided for climbing on.

### **Heating**

Crested geckos require a day time temperature range of 22°C to 27°C (72°F to 80°F) with the optimum being 24° c to 26° c (75° f to 78° f). At night temperatures can be allowed to drop as low as 13° c (55° f). Temperatures over 30° c (85° F) are dangerous for the gecko. These temperatures can be achieved by using a heat mat mounted on the outside of a wall and controlled by a thermostat. The UV light (see below) will also provide some heat. Always use a maximum/minimum thermometer to check temperatures.

### **Lighting**

Crested geckos are nocturnal, so the lighting requirements are different from diurnal species but still very important. A 5% UV light should be used to help the gecko use the calcium from its diet. A 10-12 hour light cycle will be fine. It is recommended to replace UV lights every 6 months due to a decline in UV output. Please go to [www.uvguide.co.uk](http://www.uvguide.co.uk) for more information

### **Feeding and Water**

Crested Geckos are omnivorous meaning they eat live insects and vegetation. In the wild, their diet is high in small soft fruit (non citrus), along with whatever invertebrates that happen to be within striking distance. In captivity, fresh soft fruits (and baby food) like Banana, Peach, and Apricot, are

relished by Crested Geckos, as well as Crickets, and as a treat small locusts, mealworms and wax worms. Livefoods should be coated in a vitamin and mineral supplement such as Repton to ensure the Crested Gecko is getting the best nutrition possible. A special Crested Gecko diet food is now also available, mix this with water and pour into their food dish. Or alternatively mix with fruit baby foods and freeze in an ice cube tray to make a very easy to use diet which can be defrosted as and when needed. A bowl of drinking water should always be available and the enclosure should be sprayed daily with water. The gecko will drink the droplets formed, and it will also raise the humidity of the terrarium.

### **Handling**

Crested Geckos are a good lizard for handling. They should be treated gently, with love and care allowing it to sit on the hands. They naturally get around by jumping from branch to branch so be prepared for it to jump up onto your shoulder. Never grab or pick up a Crested Gecko by its tail as they will shed the tail as a defense mechanism. It will not grow back!

### **Keeping Together**

Males do not get on with each other as adults and will fight, so only keep one per enclosure. Males can be kept with a group of females providing the terrarium is large enough to accommodate them. Females are ok to be kept as a colony. If you have males and females together, expect them to mate and lay eggs!

### **Maintenance**

Regular spot cleaning of the terrarium should be performed to keep it hygienic for both the animal and the keeper. Dead live foods and the Crested Gecko's faeces should be removed when noticed. Change the substrate once a month or as required and clean the terrarium with a reptile safe disinfectant such as Medivet Vetaclean.