

Crested Gecko Caresheet

Crested geckos are originally from New Caledonia. Crested geckos frequently lose their tails by adulthood, as it can come off in a defense mechanism known as autotomy. Geckos that still have their tails should never be grabbed by the tail for this reason. Crested geckos reach an adult size of 4-4.5 inches (not including tail). They can live 15 to 20 years.

Enclosure: Do not house more than one gecko together as they will fight. Terrariums that are taller than they are wide are preferred as crested geckos are arboreal (tree dwelling). The minimum tank size for a crested gecko is a 20 gallon/12x12x18. 18x18x24 or larger preferred. Screen cages or glass tanks with screen tops work well. Use paper, large rocks, or artificial turf as a substrate on the bottom of the cage. Provide lots of items to climb on! Crested geckos would rather sit in tangles of leaves high up than in caves on the ground.

Temperature: A ceramic heat lamp should provide a focal basking spot of 78-82°F, while the rest of the cage should have a gradient down to the low 70's°F. At night, the cage can cool down to 65-70°F. Make sure your heat is on a thermostat so you don't overheat your gecko. At temperatures over 84°F, crested geckos can become stressed, so a heat lamp may not be required or advisable during all seasons, in a warm climate. Do not allow contact with the lamp. DO NOT use hot rocks or pads as they can easily cause thermal burns! Use a digital thermometer for temperature measurement and measure at the level where the gecko lives.

Humidity: Humidity should be maintained at 50-70% and monitored using a hygrometer. Misting the cage or using a humidifier may be helpful.

Lighting: No colored lighting. A UV light should provide 12 hours of light with 2-5% UVB. At night, make sure lights are off.

Diet: In the wild, crested geckos have a complex diet of insects and fruits. Formulated diets have been developed specifically for crested geckos, making them easy to feed in captivity. They tend to do well on brands such as Pangea Complete Gecko Diet or Repashy Superfoods Crested Gecko Diet. These diets are rehydrated with water, placed out in the evening and left until morning, for the gecko to eat as much as they want. Feed crested geckos every other day. This diet should be supplemented with insects, offered 1-3 times per week. We do not recommend feeding wild caught insects as they can give parasites or diseases to your gecko. Do not feed fireflies! They are poisonous! Captive-raised insects need to be fed either a gut-loading diet available at the pet-store, or a special diet recommended by your veterinarian. These insects should be misted in a zip-loc bag, then dusted with a calcium-only powder coating before feeding to the gecko (we recommend using Repashy SuperCal noD). Insects not eaten by the morning after feeding should be removed from the cage so they do not chew on the gecko! Crested gecko's can also be given small pieces of fruit, as treats. Many like mango, papaya,

banana, and berries. In the wild, crested geckos drink water droplets off of leaves. Some may not figure out how to use a water dish. Use either a water drip system or ice cubes on a mesh cage top and allow them to melt and drip on leaves beneath with a water dish below them. This may also help geckos learn to use a water dish as the water splashing attracts their attention. Alternatively, the cage can be misted twice daily. Be sure that the water dish is shallow and geckos can climb out of it if they fall in to prevent drowning!

Vet care: Crested geckos can be very good at hiding illness. We recommend biannual exams, with fecal parasite screening and x-rays, to make sure your pet is healthy! Common problems are intestinal parasites, anorexia, and intestinal obstruction. Remember with any disease processes, the sooner the vet sees the animal, the more successful they are at treating it! For those in Western Washington we recommend Pine Tree Veterinarian in Maple Valley, or Blue Pearl in Tacoma for emergencies.