

Crested Gecko

Crested Geckos are fascinating, arboreal geckos from the small group of islands of New Caledonia. These amazing geckos come in a variety of color patterns, and their easy-to-meet care requirements have made them an excellent choice for beginners and a popular reptile in the hobby. These geckos are omnivorous and may eat many non-citrus fruits, pollen, and insects. Crested Geckos are a great display animal and are relatively easy to handle.

- **Common Name:** Crested Gecko
- **Scientific Name:** *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*
- **Distribution:** New Caledonia
- **Size:** 5-9"
- **Life Span:** 8-20 yr

Habitat

- Open-Air screen cages are great choices for Crested Geckos throughout all stages of life.
- Crested Geckos are arboreal and should be kept in a vertically oriented cage.
- Hatchlings can be kept in groups of no more than 5 per 20 gallon cage. Males should not be housed together as they may eventually become territorial and fight.
- Offer plenty of climbing choices such as cork branch, flexible vines, and other cage décor. Addition of a ficus tree is a good way to provide climbing space and cover. All plants must be free of pesticides and other chemicals and should be rinsed prior to adding to the enclosure.

Heating

- Daytime Terrarium Temperature: 78-82°F
- Basking Spot: 82-85°F
- Nighttime Temperature: 68-73°F
- Crested Geckos come from a mild climate and are sensitive to excessive heat. It is crucial to make sure that temperatures do not exceed 90°F! Always use a thermometer to monitor enclosure temperatures – Don't guess!
- A low wattage heat bulb such as the blue or red light is a great choice for providing heat for Crested Geckos.

Lighting

- We recommend using 5.0 UVB for Crested Geckos. Although Crested Geckos are nocturnal and do not require much direct exposure to sunlight, there is growing evidence that exposure to low levels of UV light is beneficial to their overall health and encourages natural behaviors.
- UVB is also a good choice for enclosures with live plants as it will help encourage plant growth.

Substrates

- It is strongly recommended that hatchling geckos not be kept on any type of loose substrate. Reptile carpet is the safest and cleanest substrate for young geckos. Paper towels are a great alternative.
- Cypress mulch and cocoanut fiber can be used as a substrate in terrariums. Provide a nest box with at least 2 ½ inches of substrate in all enclosures that house adult females.
- New Zealand Sphagnum Moss can be added as a substrate topper to hold additional moisture if needed.

Nutrition

- Crested Geckos are omnivores that eat a variety of foods and need to be offered a well balanced diet. In nature, Crested Geckos live on insects and non-citrus fruits such as figs.
- Dry Crested Gecko foods are available in juvenile and adult formulas and make an excellent staple diet for these geckos.
- Feeder insects should be soft-bodied and no longer than the width of the gecko's head. Crickets, mealworms, and the occasional wax worm are good choices.
- Reptile vitamin powder and reptile calcium powder should be added to foods as directed to ensure complete nutrition.
- If possible, it can be beneficial to offer foods off the ground as Crested Geckos naturally feed in the canopy of trees and try to avoid ground predators.

Water

- Provide a clean water dish with shallow fresh water at all times.
- Always add water conditioner to remove Chlorine and Chloramines. Crested Geckos prefer to drink or lap water from leaves. This can be accomplished in a terrarium by offering a drip system or a misting system.
- Terrariums should be kept at moderate to high relative humidity (50% - 70% RH). Use a Hygrometer to monitor relative humidity within the enclosure.
- Spray or mist your terrarium daily to help maintain humidity.
- There are foggers available that can be used to regulate humidity.