

Giant Day Gecko

Giant Day Geckos are large, beautiful geckos. They are diurnal which means that they are active during the day. While these geckos make fascinating terrarium animals, they are speedy creatures and should not be handled regularly. They can be a joy to observe and add color and activity to a planted terrarium.

This care sheet is also appropriate for similar Day Gecko species of the *Phelsuma* genus, such as the Gold Dust Day Gecko and Koch's Giant Day Gecko.

Common Name: Giant Day Gecko

Scientific Name: *Phelsuma madagascariensis grandis*

Distribution: Madagascar

Size: 5-9 inches

Life Span: 8-20 years

Habitat

Day Geckos are arboreal and should be kept in a vertically oriented enclosure. Make sure to update their habitat appropriately to their size.

Hatchlings should be kept in groups of no more than 5 per 20 gallon enclosure. As adults, these animals should be housed singly as they may become territorial and fight.

Offer plenty of climbing and cover choices with Flexible Vines, Cork Rounds, Ledges, Bushy Plants, and other cage decor. The Addition of plants like a Ficus tree can also be a good way to provide climbing space and cover. Make sure all terrarium decor are pesticide and chemical free, and have been rinsed thoroughly.

Heating

Daytime Terrarium Temperature: 80-85°F

Basking Spot: 85-90°F

Nighttime Temperature: 70-75°F

Day Geckos come from a tropical climate and their terrarium must be maintained at the proper temperatures. Always use a thermometer to monitor enclosure temperatures – Don't guess!

A heat bulb such as a basking spot lamp is a good way to provide daytime heat for Day Geckos. Use a nocturnal infrared heat lamp to provide night time or 24 hour heat.

An under tank heater can be attached to the tank to provide additional heat as needed.

Lighting

UVB lighting can be great for Giant Day Geckos. Exposure to the proper levels of UV light is essential to their overall health and encourages natural behaviors. Always check to make sure your lighting is set up correctly and at the recommended distances.

Special plant lighting can be added to enclosures with live plants as it will help encourage plant growth.

Provide visible light for 12-14 hours during the day. Use of a timer makes providing the proper day and night cycle easy.

Substrates

- Cypress Mulch and coconut husk bedding are great substrates that can help maintain humidity, which is important for Giant Day Geckos.
- Sphagnum Moss, Terrarium Moss, or Frog Moss can be added as substrate topper to hold additional moisture if needed.

- It is strongly recommended that hatchling Giant Day Geckos not be kept on any type of loose substrate. Reptile carpet or paper towels are the safest and cleanest substrate for young geckos.

Nutrition

- Day Geckos are omnivores that eat a variety of foods and need to be offered a well balanced diet. In nature, Day Geckos live on insects, small vertebrates, and flower nectar.
- 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 vitamins and reptile calcium should be added to foods as directed to ensure complete nutrition.
- If possible, it can be beneficial to offer foods off the ground as Day 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. Day 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 or manually misting. Terrariums should be kept at moderate to high relative humidity (65%-70% RH). Use a Hygrometer to monitor relative humidity within the enclosure.
- Spray or mist your terrarium daily to help maintain humidity.
- A Waterfall can be used in a Naturalistic Terrarium to provide a constant source of running water and help maintain humidity for

Day Geckos.

Tips

- Purchase a quality book on the care and husbandry of these animals before bringing any animal home.

This is only a basic care sheet,

Please continue to educate yourself on your new family member.