



Why Do Gargoyle Geckos Make Great Pets?

A standard to the reptile community, captive-bred gargoyle geckos make great pets! Their small size, hardiness, attractive appearance and availability makes this species a suitable choice for beginners. Their size and availability also mean that their affordable husbandry requirements can be easily maintained in any home or apartment.

Lifespan

Gargoyle geckos are a long-lived, hardy species with an average lifespan of 15-20 years.

Size

You can expect your gargoyle gecko to reach an adult length of 8-10" with their tail making up nearly half of their length. They reach sexual maturity in 15 to 18 months.

Natural History

Gargoyle geckos are native to New Caledonia, a group of islands between Fiji and Australia. Nocturnal by nature, these geckos spend most of their day hiding among low-level trees and foliage and hunting insects at night. Although they may appear dinosaur-like, their skin is exceptionally soft, almost suede-like. They also lack eyelids and can be observed remoistening their eyes with their tongue often.

Housing

Because of this gecko's arboreal nature, the height of the enclosure is more important than its length. A gargoyle gecko can be housed in a 10 to 20-gallon tank which stands a minimum of 23" tall, although larger housing is recommended when housing multiple animals together (but never more than one male per enclosure).

Lighting & Heating

To properly thermoregulate, reptiles must be provided with a healthy temperature gradient as is appropriate for each species. For gargoyle geckos, these nocturnal, tree dwelling lizards thrive in cooler, temperate conditions.

The ideal ambient temperature of the enclosure should remain between 68-80F and can drop into the 70s at night, which is generally room temperature for most households. If the home is warmer than 82F however, then this may not be the pet for you. While hardy, overheating is their downfall, and your gecko may die if exposed to warmer temperatures. In other words, for most of the year you may find that you will not need to supply supplemental heating, and you especially do not want to place your enclosure in direct sunlight.

If your household tends to be cooler, especially during seasonal fluctuations, the use of low wattage heating pads adhered to the glass and/or nocturnal heat bulbs suspended over the cage are the best

way to provide heat. The ideal humidity range for this species is between 50-70%. Measure temperatures and humidity closely with digital thermometers and hygrometers.

Although this species is nocturnal, new studies have shown that gargoyle geckos benefit greatly from 1-2 hours of UVB exposure daily. Exposure to appropriate wavelengths of UV can provide a day/night cycle for your gecko and aid in the absorption and metabolism of calcium. Providing a low output UVB is recommended but is not necessary.

Substrates & Cage Décor

Gargoyle geckos are arboreal, tree dwelling lizards and as such require plenty of branches and plants to climb on and hide behind. Sterilized woods, cork bark flats/rounds/tubes, artificial vines, and commercially available reptile décor work well for providing your gecko with climbing and hiding opportunities. Most artificial plants as well as live plants provide visual barriers and may boost humidity levels in the enclosure.

A wide range of substrates are available for gargoyle geckos. For a more natural look, your gecko will thrive in a substrate that best mimics its natural habitat*. Cypress mulch, orchid bark chips, coco bedding or a mixture can be used. Moistened paper towels may be used for baby geckos.



Keep a shallow water dish at the bottom of the enclosure and mist the enclosure twice a day. Proper humidity is important for keeping your gecko hydrated and will help your gecko shed properly. Low humidity can lead to health problems, such as retained shed or chronic dehydration.

Diet & Nutrition

Gargoyle geckos consume both insects and nectar. Your gecko should be offered gutloaded, dusted insects regularly, which include appropriately sized crickets, dubia roaches, mealworms, or black soldier larvae. Superworms and waxworms may be offered as a treat. Never take insects from the wild, as they may contain pesticides or parasites that can harm your gecko.

Fortunately, plenty of commercially prepared diets specifically formulated for gargoyle geckos are available and provide your gecko with everything that it needs, and in some cases removes the need to feed insects at all. Brands like Repashy and Pangea make powders that need only be mixed with water and placed in an accessible dish in your gecko's enclosure.

Dusting your insects with a high quality calcium powder and multivitamin is one way to provide your gecko with all of the vitamins and nutrients they need. However, if you are feeding a commercially prepared formula as described previously, the use for additional supplementation is not needed.

Handling & Temperament

This is a species best admired, but comparable to other similar species is quite handleable. Although they can be quick to jump they are not aggressive, and with regular, gentle handling they will warm up to human interaction. Keep in mind that young or very scared geckos may drop their tails as a defense mechanism. If this happens, their tails will not grow back. Simply take care not to startle your gecko or grab its tail.