



Masters of camouflage.

The mossy leaf-tailed gecko is unique in its camo abilities. Even to the trained eye, at times it is impossible to see them in their enclosure given the right décor! These masters of disguise are unique in their appearance and even more so in their care. Given their temperamental temperature parameters, these leaf-tailed geckos are best cared for by experienced reptile parents.

Lifespan

Provided with the appropriate care, these geckos can live an average lifespan of 7-10 years.

Size

Depending on the species, you can expect your leaf-tail to reach an adult length of 10-12 inches. Hatchlings measure between 1.5-2 inches long, including the tail.

Natural History

These geckos are found exclusively in Madagascar. Crepuscular by nature, these geckos spend most of their day hiding inside tree hollows and hunting for food at night but are most active at dawn and dusk. Their earthy, moss-toned color and fringed skin allows them to blend in seamlessly into their environment. What makes them even more unique are their slitted eyes (and lack of eyelids!). Leaf-tail geckos have excellent night vision and quick reflexes for hunting prey.

Housing

Because of this gecko's arboreal nature, the height of the enclosure is more important than its length. If starting with a hatchling, a small enclosure is best to start off with and can be increased as the gecko grows larger. A single adult gecko can be housed in a minimum of 12x12x24 glass enclosure. Larger housing is always recommended, especially when housing a breeding pair or trio together, 18x18x34.

Lighting & Heating

To properly thermoregulate, reptiles must be provided with a healthy temperature gradient as is appropriate for each species. For leaf-tails, these nocturnal, tree-dwelling lizards thrive in relatively cool, humid conditions.

The ideal ambient temperature of the enclosure should remain between 68-75F and can drop into the 60s at night, with a basking temperature of 80-85F (which can be achieved with a low wattage basking bulb or ceramic heat emitter, which is turned off at night). These temperatures (excluding the basking temperatures) is generally room temperature for most households. If your home is warmer than 80F however, then this may not be the pet for you. While hardy, overheating is their downfall, and your gecko may die if exposed to prolonged temperatures exceeding 85F. In other words, for most of the year you may find that you will not need to supply supplemental heating. However, if you find it difficult to

recreate cooler temperatures inside of your gecko's enclosure, Zoo Med now makes a Repti Cooler that can be placed on the top of your enclosure to cool down temperatures inside of the tank!

The ideal humidity range for this species is between 60-80%. Measure temperatures and humidity closely with **digital** thermometers and hygrometers.

Although this species is nocturnal, new studies have shown that leaf-tails 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

Leaf-tails are arboreal, tree dwelling lizards and as such require plenty of branches and plants to climb on and hide behind. Sterilized woods, cork bark rounds/tubes, artificial vines, bamboo tubes 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 leaf-tails. 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, reptisoil or a mixture can be used. Moistened paper towels may be used for baby geckos. If your enclosure is not bioactive, substrate should be changed every 2-3 months.



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

These geckos consume primarily insects, and variety is key. Your gecko can be offered gutloaded, dusted insects occasionally which include appropriately sized crickets, dubia roaches, and black soldier larvae. Superworms, butterworms, mealworms, hornworms, and waxworms may be offered as a treat. Insects can be offered freely or in a smooth side dish. As juveniles, insects can be offered daily. As adults, insects can be offered every other day. Never take insects from the wild, as they may contain pesticides or parasites that can harm your gecko.

All food should be dusted with a high quality calcium/D3 supplement and multivitamin regularly – follow manufacturers directions. We recommend using Repashy's Calcium Plus LoD.

Handling & Temperament

These cryptic geckos are not always comfortable with being handled and are best kept as display animals only. When grasped they often jump, bite, defecate, or drop their tails. Therefore, it is in the best interest of this animal that they are not handled and are appreciated as the stunning display animals that they are.