

Leopard Gecko



Eublepharis macularius

Native to the deserts of Asia, the friendly and hardy leopard gecko has become one of the most commonly kept reptiles in the trade today. Easy to keep and breed, the leopard gecko grows to a very manageable average max size of only 10 inches and can live up to 20 years.

Housing

Size

Hatchling leopard geckos (3-4 inches) or adults (7-10 inches) can be housed comfortably in a 10 gallon tank (or a plastic tub of equivalent size). While two adult geckos could be housed in a 10 gallon tank, a 20 gallon long tank is advisable for multiple adults. It is important not to house two sexually mature males together as they may compete for territory and injure one another. It is also important not to house males and females together until they've reached adult size (approximately 45 grams). Multiple adult females can be housed with a single male safely. While a screen top is not strictly necessary because leopard geckos lack the structure on the toes that allow other species of geckos to climb tank walls, it is advisable to keep other pets or children out and prey items in.

Substrate

There are a variety of acceptable substrates for your gecko. Hatchlings to juveniles should be housed on substrate that cannot be swallowed, such as cage carpet or a sand mat. Larger geckos can be housed on sand, but cage carpet or a sand mat is acceptable as well. If a sand substrate is used, particular attention should be paid to the size of the granules, as they can potentially cause an impaction if they are too large and get swallowed.

Lighting

Leopard geckos are nocturnal and do not require a UVB bulb (having one can actually be stressful for your gecko), however it is important to supplement your gecko's diet with vitamins, especially vitamin D3.



Some products to look for

- Zoo Med ReptiTherm Under Tank Heater
- Exo Terra Sand Mat
- Lee's Mealworm Dish
- Zoo Med Mopani Wood
- Exo Terra Reptile Cave
- Rep-Cal Calcium with Vitamin D3
- Zoo Med Forest Floor Cypress Mulch
- Exo Terra Reptile Water Dish
- Zoo Med Wipe Out 1 Terrarium Cleaner



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Temperature

Maintaining proper temperature is of paramount importance for leopard geckos, as it is for all reptiles. Leopard geckos do not require a basking bulb; if you're heating element of choice is a heat lamp, the infrared or "moon light" lamp of an appropriate wattage and offset to one side of the enclosure. We recommend using an under tank heater. The correct size under tank heater should be chosen for the size of your enclosure and should be set off to one side so as to provide a warm side and a cool side to the enclosure. This temperature gradient across the enclosure allows the leopard gecko to thermoregulate on its own. The warm side of the tank should approach, but not exceed, 90°F while the cool side should be around 75°F.

Humidity

Being desert lizards, leopard geckos do not require a great deal of water or humidity most of the time. A standing dish of clean water should be available at all times. Leopard geckos shed their skin periodically in order to grow and during the shed will require increased humidity in order to shed properly. Occasionally spraying the enclosure with clean water can accomplish this, but a better option may be providing a moist shelter. This shelter should contain a substrate that holds water well (cypress mulch is great because it holds water well and resists molding) and kept moist, but not soaking wet. This hide should be made available around shedding time (you'll know it's time when your gecko's color is dulled). Sometimes, if proper humidity is not maintained, you gecko may retain some skin on the toes; if left untreated this can lead to lost toes. You can help your gecko remove this excess skin by giving it some time to soak in a warm water bath to soften/loosen the skin and then removing the skin.

Diet

Insects

Leopard geckos enjoy a variety of insects. There are a myriad of choices available that include crickets, superworms, and dubia roaches. All of the choices have their own advantages and disadvantages and the merits of each should be researched before selecting a feeder choice. Regardless of the type of feeder chosen, supplementing with vitamins and calcium is a must. Some feeders may also require gut loading.

Other food choices

Other foods, like pinkies, wax worms, and hornworms can be great as a treat, or to put weight on a skinny gecko, but they should not be used as a staple food.



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