



("Feeders" continued...)

- Alternatively feed your chameleon superworms, flies, bean beetles, moths. You can also offer horn worms and/or silkworms but you may find the chameleon doesn't eat too many of them.
- Get into the habit of keeping feeders healthy and happy.
- Free-ranging feeders is best for the chameleon to hunt their prey but be sure to remove any fecal matter from the enclosure before feeding the chameleon. This prevents them from being reinfected with parasites.
- Only free range as many feeders as your chameleon will typically eat.
- Remove feeders from the enclosure before the chameleon goes to sleep at night. Sometimes nocturnal insects will nibble on a sleeping chameleon causing lesions.
- Gutload feeders using a healthy gutload supplement, some leafy greens, vegetables and/or fruits. They need very little so use sparingly, removing any spoiled items.

### Supplements

- Use the best quality vitamin and mineral supplements that are formulated specifically for chameleons.
- Supplements should be provided about 2 times a week but follow instructions provided by manufacturer for best results.
- Dust feeders lightly by shaking off excess supplement powder.

### Hygiene

- Remove fecal matter from the enclosure any time you see it. If it has an odor to it, have your vet run a test for parasites.
- Wash your hands before and after handling your chameleon or any part of its environment.
- Wash down the enclosure as often as possible but keeping things clean on a daily basis will lessen the frequency of deep cleanings.

### Veterinary Care

- Find an exotics veterinarian near you and take your chameleon in for an initial exam. This will help if and when you have a more urgent matter.
- Keep a journal of any developments (good and bad) and record weights on a regular basis. This will help give insight to both you and your vet as to changes in your chameleon's health.

### Support

- Social media is fun but you can gain a lot by joining a forum specifically for discussion on chameleon-related topics. You'll have access to other members who have varying levels of experience. It's also a great way to find resources for top-notch husbandry supplies.
- Join a herpetologist club, but if you're fortunate enough to have a local chameleon keepers group, join that too.
- ChamEO is a non-profit organization dedicated to chameleons and their keepers. Visit us online and check out the adoptions we have available.

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**Chameleon Education and Outreach, Inc.**

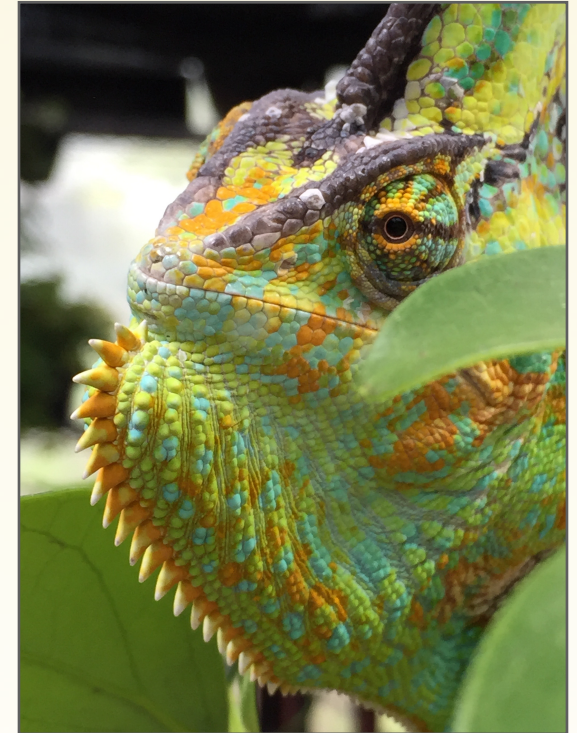
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# CHAMELEON

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE

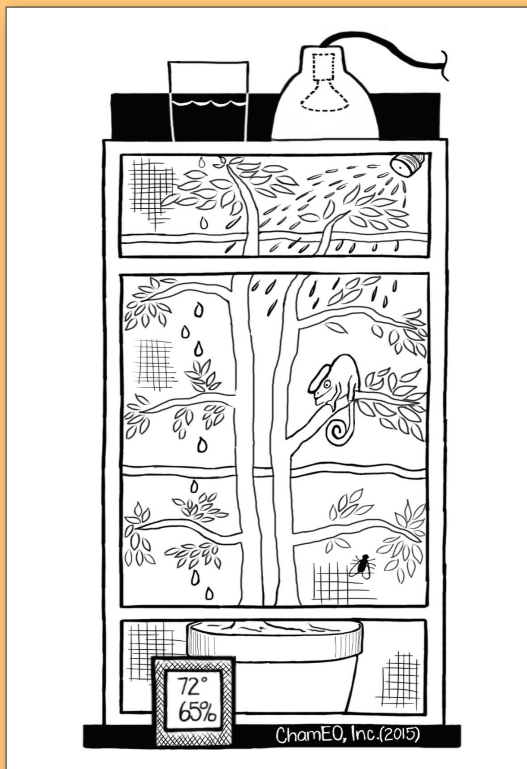


### KEEPING CHAMELEONS

This guide will help get you started on the right foot when creating your first chameleon set-up. With so much information available about reptiles, it can be overwhelming trying to decipher which suggestions to take or which supplies to buy. In this guide, we share what we've learned over many years of working exclusively with chameleons. We are here to support you in providing your chameleon the best care possible.

## BASIC CHAMELEON SET-UP

- All screen cage with fitted drip tray
- Branches for multiple perch options
- Misting system or spray bottle
- Drinker or plastic cup with holes in bottom
- Linear Light Fixture
- UVB Light Tube
- Spot bulb fixture
- Basking light bulb (incandescent, **not CFL**)
- Calcium supplement
- Feeder gutload
- Feeder Insects: roaches, superworms, etc.
- Live Plants
- Digital Hygrometer



## Recommendations to start you off...

### Creating an Artificial Environment

An enclosure is not just a cage. It is an enclosed environment that is customized to provide a chameleon everything it needs to thrive. It also provides protection from injuries or predators. If you set the cage up just right, your chameleon will be content. Lower stress helps increase longevity.

### Location

- Choose a location in your home that has minimal traffic, adequate air circulation without being drafty, and plenty of ambient light during the day. This location should also provide a very dark environment after sunset to help the chameleon sleep.
- Consider setting up an outdoor enclosure for your chameleon to benefit from natural sunlight and fresh air.

### Cage

- All screen cages
- Adult chameleons such as panthers and Veileds should be housed in a minimum size of 2' deep x 2' wide x 4' tall.
- Dwarf species can be kept in medium sized cages (appx. 18" deep x 18" wide x 30" tall).
- Pygmy species can be kept in smaller screened cages but you will need more space if you house more than one male in the enclosure. They also do well in the medium and large glass reptile terrariums.

### Lighting

- UVB Light--use Reptisun 5.0 (LINEAR) light tube. This is a reliable light and recommended by top breeders.

- Hood for linear UVB light tube. It should prevent your eyes from seeing it because it's not good for human eyes.
- Basking Light--use an incandescent spot light bulb that will provide enough heat to create ideal basking temperatures at the highest perch position in the enclosure.
- Avoid using compact fluorescent lights. They don't provide reliable and adequate UVB.
- Take your chameleon outside for natural sunshine on a regular basis. Ideally, you should set up an outdoor enclosure.

### Hydration:

- Misting system or misting bottle
- Drinker, a delcup with small pinholes in it works well.
- Always provide fresh, clean, filtered water.
- Drip tray or pan. You can purchase one that is fitted to your cage or you can make your own.

### Inside the Enclosure

- Perches should be of varying thicknesses but comfortable for the chameleon's foot to hold (so not too thin and not too thick).
- Live plants provide coverage, hiding spots, drinking surfaces, humidity. Many are washable too.
- Keep plant soil down to a minimum since it is impossible to clean. You can cover it with moss or stones, just make sure the stones cannot be eaten by the chameleon.

### Feeders

- Variety is very important, so keep at least 2 but the more you can provide, the better.
- The bulk of the feeders can be crickets but Dubia roaches are much more nutritious.