

No. 1.

Leopard Geckos

Eublepharus macularius

and

other ground living
or night active
geckos and skinks

An
Introductory
Information Leaflet
from

in association with

EURO REP
LIMITED

Europe's Premier
Reptile Product Company

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Background Heat

Use a heat mat between half and two thirds the size of the cage to provide background heating. The hottest spot in the cage should not be above 38°C while the coolest should not be below 20°C. Use a *HabiStat Mat - Stat* if the temperature is too hot but the whole cage in a cooler place if the temperature is not cool enough.

Optional Hot Spot

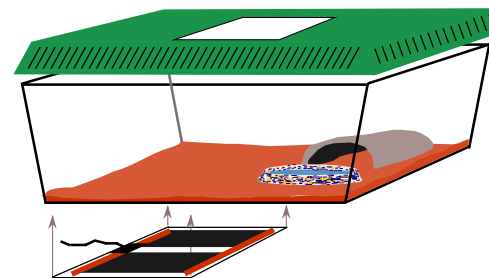
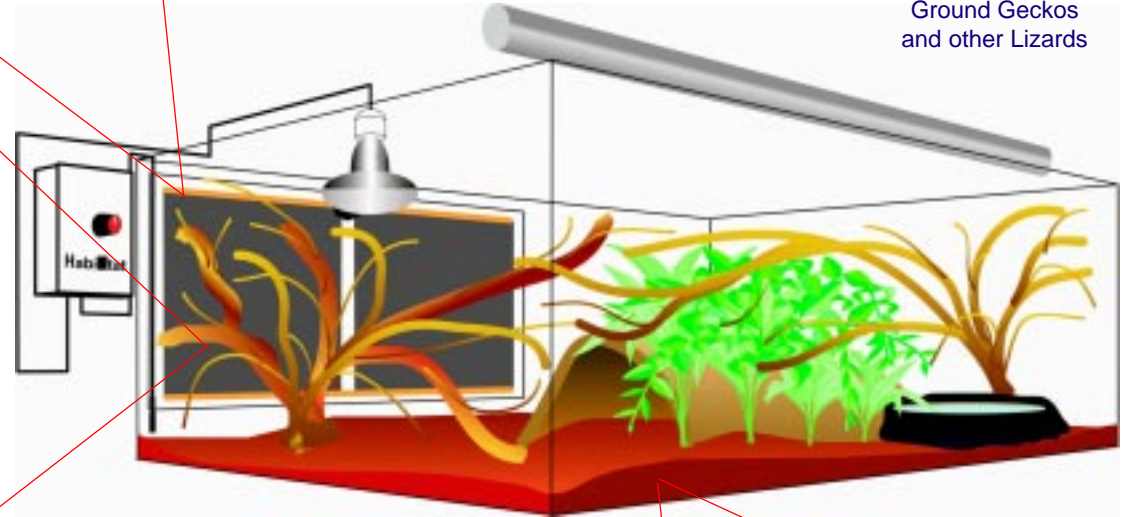
A local area of higher temperature may be created with a hot rock, a spot lamp or a ceramic heater. Use the latter two in conjunction with a *HabiStat* thermostat for precise control. Hot spots should be maintained for the same day length as the lights, fourteen hours in summer, eight in winter.

Simple set up for beginners: A moulded plastic cage is set up with a heat mat taped to the base. The mat should be about half the size of the cage. On to the floor of the cage the substrate is spread as very thin layer of no more than 1 cm. (A thicker layer will act as an insulator and block the heat from the mat.) Check with a thermometer that the cage is within the acceptable temperature range. Cork Bark or Curio Wood could be used to make hide or a *Repti-rock* cave could be used. A *Repti-rock* water dish would be the only other essential. When satisfied everything is OK, add the lizard!

Food: Crickets, Locusts, Mealworms, and as a special treat Waxworms. Supplement livefoods by dusting insects with *Repton* or feeding *Cricket Diet Plus*, *Mealworm Diet Plus*. Tame individuals may also accept a commercially prepared, fresh meat reptile diet and thawed rodent pups. Water should be fresh and changed every day. These lizards may also eat an amount of fresh sweet fruit and nectar.

Cleanliness and Hygiene: A routine cleaner for all nonporous surfaces could be *Vetaclene*. Anything that cannot be easily cleaned should be thrown away and replaced. Any little graze or blemish on the animals themselves would benefit from the first aid afforded by dabbing the wound with *Vetadine*. As far as human hygiene is concerned, *Vetasept Surgical Scrub* will clean hands and surfaces while *Vetasept Hand Rub* will allow adequate cleansing and disinfection even in cases when water is unavailable.

Cages Suitable for
Ground Geckos
and other Lizards



Cage Set Up The cage should be set up to allow an active lizard plenty of scope to climb, bask in a hot spot, move to a cooler spot, drink and hunt for food. The lizards should also be able to secrete themselves into refuges and rub themselves against something when shedding their skin.

Cage Decor: Desert, Savannah or Rain Forest Substrates and Repti-Sand can all be used bone dry as the cage base. These will blot up and 'clump' any fouling by the lizards. Clumps of waste can be removed without cleaning the whole tank out. *Cork Bark Logs* or *Curio Wood* could be used to make an interesting three dimensional display. *Flake Rain Forest Substrate* scattered over the surface makes for an attractive display and acts as an activity medium in which the lizards can hunt. Draping *Repti-Vines* in the cage will provide refuges the lizards can hide in or move through to loosen shedding skin. *Repti-rock* caves and water dishes would lend even more functionality and security.

Shopping List

Not every thing is needed to begin with, usually one item from each of the categories marked •. As a basic starting point the following essentials are considered the minimum needed:

Plastic Cage
Heat Mat
Rain Forest Substrate
Repti-rock dish
Thermometer
Repti-Vine
Piece of Cork Bark
or all these items are available in a Starter Kit

After a while as your collection and experience grows other alternatives and extras can be used.

- **HabiStat, Heat Mats**
(6x11/7w, 11x11/12w, 17x11/20w, 23x11/28w, 29x11/35w, 35x11/42w & 49x11/55w) & **Strips**
(17x6/10w, 23x6/15w, 35x6/22w & 47x6/30w)
- **Dinosaur Fossil Hot Rocks**
- **Ceramics Bulb Heaters**
(60w, 100w, 150w, 250w, Reflectors & Holders)
- **Thermometers** (Alcohol, dial, minimum - maximum & electronic digital)
- **Hygrometers** (Dial & electronic digital)
- **HabiStat Thermostats**
(Mat-Stat/100w, Temperature/300w, Twin/2x300, Pulse Proportional/600w, Dimming/600w & Night Time Drop Function)
- **Repti-rock Dishes Hides & Caves**
- **Repti-Vines**
- **Desert Substrate**
- **Rain Forest Substrate**
- **Repti-Sand**
- **Cork Bark**
- **Curio Wood**
Malaysian Bog Wood
WoodVine
- **Reptile D₃ Lights** (18"/15w & 24"/20w)
- **Blacklights** (18"/15w & 24"/20w)
- **Activa Professional Lights** (18"/15w & 24"/18w)
- **Arcadia Control Units**
(15w, 2x15w, 18w, 2x18w, 20w & 2x20w)
- **Frozen Mouse 'Pinkies'**
Frozen Prepared Lizard Diet
- **Crickets**
&/or **Locusts**
&/or **Mealworms**
Waxworms
- **Repton**
- **Mealworm Diet Plus**
Cricket Diet Plus
- **ProBalance**
- **Vetaclean**
Vetadine
- **Vetasept Surgical Scrub**
Vetasept Hand Rub
- **Books & Leaflets**

Leopard Geckos...

...Biology

Leopard Geckos grow to about 23cm and are stoutish lizards from Central Asia. The tail is about one third the total length. They are attractively coloured in yellows and black. Depending on how old they are, with either a banded or mottled markings. The animals offered as pets will be usually be captive bred and are often juveniles.

...Housing

Leopard Geckos are best housed in as large a cage as possible. As this will take into account their rapid rate of growth. The cage should be set up in a manner similar to the diagram overleaf. The warmest part of the cage should be near 32°C, while the coolest part, nearer 28°C. An optional hot spot could operate during the day but the heat source should be screened, perhaps by the lid ventilation, to protect the animals from burning. White and UV lights are further options and are best switched on for about fourteen hours per day in summer dropping to eight in winter.

Much of the success achieved in keeping lizards will come from the skilful manipulation of ventilation. They usually require low-ish humidity and cannot stand stagnant air conditions. Fresh air moving into the cage is essential. Use the upward draughts caused by heated air rising to flush out the cage and drag fresh air in. A light daily misting with a hand sprayer will provide any humidity required.

...Husbandry

Most lizards may be kept singly or in groups. Of course the more lizards kept in each cage, the larger the cage should be. The minimum cage size for a hatchling Leopard Gecko would be about 20 cm x 15 cm and this would increase to 35 cm x 25cm for an adult. Other species should be housed proportionately. Mature males will tend to fight and no more than one should be present in any one cage. In any case, there should be plenty of retreats and visual screens to allow the animals some privacy. Watch out for bullying, particularly among juveniles.

To handle any lizard, the whole animal should be gently grasped and held in the hands. One hand beneath, supporting and the other over the head and body controlling it. Most species will just about tolerate being handled but do not really like it. The tail is easily shed and should not be grasped. Once shed, however, a new tail will usually grow in time.

In time the cage will begin to look scruffy as faeces and debris builds up. As everything recommended for the cage is washable or disposable, a good clean out is easily done. Eight to ten weeks would be about as long as the cage could be left before being completely cleaned. The cage set up advised in this leaflet is practicable and can be made to look pleasing to the eye. If a more natural set up is envisaged, it may be best to look in some of the very informative books and magazine articles on Lizards first. Designs of this type are a little tricky to balance, especially if live plants and soil are used.

...Food & Feeding

Insects like crickets and locusts form the staple diet in captivity for small specimens. Mealworms can also be fed. Insects should be dusted with *Repton*, a vitamin and mineral supplement. Alternatively 'load' the insect food by feeding with *Cricket* and *Mealworm Diet Plus* but do not do both! Other insects that are eaten including Waxworms but these are best given only occasionally as a treat. Another occasional meal could include commercially prepared, fresh meat reptile diet or a thawed frozen rodent pup. With all food it is important to balance the nutrients. These lizards grow very rapidly, so any dietary deficiency will quickly result in deformity. Calcium and the associated vitamin D₃ being particularly important.

Live food is only eaten if it is seen to move and will usually be jumped upon and grabbed with the mouth. One lizard may eat up to ten or more insects at one meal; it will depend upon their size. Feed the lizards every other day with just enough to be completely eaten in fifteen minutes. Try not to leave an excess of uneaten insects in the cage.

In addition to live food a portion of sweet fruit, leafy vegetable and salad can be offered daily.

A small water dish kept full of fresh water should always be available. The lizards will drink from this but should not be allowed to bathe in it.

...Reproduction

Male Leopard Geckos are proportionately larger than the females and they have broader heads. The male's tail is swollen with the copulatory organs and there are small spur like projection either side. There is also a row of pores along the scale covering the male's vent.

A period of courtship proceeds mating and during this time much activity can be expected. Batches of two eggs are laid after mating and they may take several weeks to hatch. To grow to adult in captivity may take as short a time as twelve months but in the wild, two to five years may elapse. A cooler winter period with shorter day length will be needed to condition the lizards for breeding in the following season. The lizards available as pets are mostly captive bred. In their native habitat they are still relatively common but wild individuals are only occasionally available.

...Health & Disease

Leopard Geckos live for many years in the wild but seem to live even longer in captivity. They do not suffer from many diseases and veterinary attention is rarely needed. An environment and diet as described in this leaflet will preclude most problems. The most often encountered disease will be a metabolic bone disorder caused by insufficient vitamin D₃ or calcium. Good practice, hygiene and first aid will probably deal with rest. If real disease is discovered, a vet must of course, be consulted. Pet lizards do not pose a real threat to human health. All the normal hygiene precautions regarding humans and animals should, however, be observed.