

# Green Iguanas

(*Iguana iguana*)

An Introductory  
Information Leaflet

in association with



Europe's Premier  
Reptile Product Company

### Hot Spot

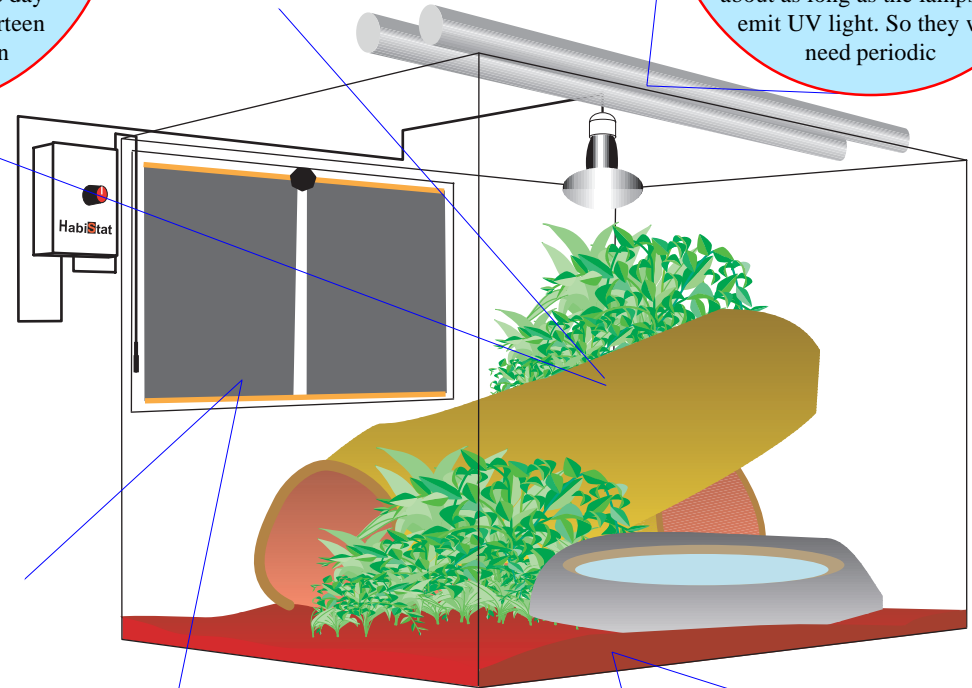
A local area of higher temperature may be created with an *Reptile Basking Spotlight* or a small *Pearlco* ceramic. Use them in conjunction with a *HabiStat* thermostat for precise control. Protect the animals with an intervening wire mesh if necessary. Hot spots should be maintained for the same day length as the lights, fourteen hours in summer, ten in winter.

**Cleanliness and Hygiene:** A routine cleaner for all nonporous surfaces would be *Vetaclean*, followed by a thorough rinse. 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.

### Ultra Violet Light.

A fluorescent tube that emits UV light is essential for healthy lizards. A full spectrum tube like *Reptile D<sub>3</sub>* could be used as these emit white light as well. The lamps need to be on about fourteen hours per day in summer and ten in winter. Between six months and one year is about as long as the lamps will emit UV light. So they will need periodic

**Cage Decor:** Use Rain Forest Substrate as a base as it will stand up to the periodic spraying with water these lizards need. A large *Repti-rock* water dish could be used to provide a 'pond'. Cork bark tubes or Curio wood could be used to make an interesting three dimensional display. While draping *Repti-Vines* in the cage will provide refuges the lizards can hide in or move through to loosen shedding skin. *Repti-rock* caves would lend even more functionality and security. Do not use live plants as the iguanas will eat them.



A Cage suitable for keeping  
Green Iguanas

### 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 32°C while the coolest should not be below 24°C. Use a *HabiStat Mat - Stat* if the temperature is too hot but put the whole cage in a cooler place if the temperature is not cool enough.

**Food:** A good selection of leafy vegetables and salads. Other vegetables and fruit can be given in smaller amounts and if too tough for the lizard to comfortably bite into, they should be shredded. Dust with *Reptavite* to balance the vitamins and minerals. About 5% of the diet can be insects like crickets, locusts and mealworms. Dust these with *Repton* or 'gut load', see overleaf. Younger animals eat proportionately more animal food, say up to 15%.

### Cage Set Up

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

## 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:

**Vivarium**  
**Heat Mat**  
**Basking Spot Lamp**  
**HabiStat Dimming Thermostats (Highly recommended)**  
**Rain Forest Substrate**  
**Repti-rock dish**  
**Thermometer**  
**Repti-Vine**  
**Piece of Cork Bark**  
**Reptile D<sub>3</sub> Lights**  
**Arcadia Control Units**

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)

- **Basking Spot lamp**  
(60w, 100w, Normal,  
Daylight and Red Night  
types.)  
**Pearlco Bulb Ceramics**  
(60w, 100w, Reflectors &  
Holders)
- **Thermometers** (Alcohol,  
dial, minimum - maximum  
& digital electronic)
- **Hygrometers** (Dial &  
digital electronic)
- **HabiStat Thermostats**  
(Mat-Stat/100w,  
Temperature/300w, Twin/  
2x300w, Pulse  
Proportional/600w,  
Dimming/600w & Night  
Time Drop Function)
- **HabiStat Night Eye, Sun  
Switches & Moon  
Switches**
- **Repti-rock Dishes Hides  
& Caves**

- **Repti-Vines**
- **Rain Forest Substrate**
- **Cork Bark**
- **Curio Wood**
- **Reptile D<sub>3</sub> Lights** (18"/  
15w & 24"/18w)  
**Activa Professional  
Lights** (18"/15w & 24"/  
18w)  
or **Black lights** (18"/15w  
& 24"/20w)  
**Arcadia Control Units**  
(15w, 2x15w, 18w, 2x18w,  
20w & 2x20w)
- **Crickets**  
&/or **Locusts**  
&/or **Mealworms**  
**Waxworms**
- **Mealworm Diet Plus**  
**Cricket Diet Plus**
- **Repton**  
**Reptavite**  
**Reptasol**  
**ProBalance**
- **Vetaclean**  
**Vetadine**
- **Vetasept Surgical Scrub**  
**Vetasept Hand Rub**

## Green Iguanas...

### ...Biology

Iguanas are a medium to large lizards that come from Central and South America. They are usually green in colour with a variety of other colours forming the bodily markings and pattern. The roughly 15 cm babies grow into adults that may be between 100 cms and 200 cms. In most cases the tail is over half the total length. Many of the animals available as pets are specifically bred in farms in the countries in which they naturally occur.

### ...Housing

These lizards are best housed in a tall cages as they are naturally arboreal, that is they live in trees and bushes, often over hanging pools and streams. The longest measurement of their cage could be its height. Iguanas are best housed in as large a cage as possible. Because of their rapid rate of growth and the heating and lighting equipment they need, purpose made vivaria are probably the most appropriate. The types with sliding glass doors to the front being especially resistant to escape. Another often used cage, especially for juveniles is a converted aquarium. A special adapting lid is used to contain the reptiles and house any equipment that may be used. Many other types of cage can be used to house these lizards.

As a guide, a minimum size, 90 cm x 45 cm x 60 cm would house a 45 cm lizard. The cage should be set up in a manner similar to the diagram over leaf. It will be necessary to provide a local hot spot near 40°C, while the coolest part of the cage should be nearer 28°C. The hot spot can easily be arranged by installing a *Basking Spot Lamp*. To ensure the cage does not overheat, the lamp is best controlled with a *HabiStat Dimming Thermostat*. White and UV light, from a lamp like a Reptile D<sub>3</sub> tube, will be needed and should be present for a similar period; about sixteen hours per day in summer dropping to eight in winter.

Ventilation is very important. These lizards require highish humidity but cannot stand stagnant air conditions. Fresh air moving into the cage is essential. Use the upward draughts caused by warm air rising to flush out the cage and drag fresh air in. A light daily misting with a hand sprayer will provide the humidity that is required.

### ...Husbandry

Most may be kept singly or in groups. Of course the more lizards kept in each cage, the larger the cage should be. Each juvenile lizard will require about 30 cm x 30 cm x 60 cm of space but much more when they are adult. Males will tend to fight if more than one adult is present in the cage. Overall, the cage should be as large possible with plenty of hiding spaces and visual screens.

To handle this type of lizard the whole animal should be gently grasped around the shoulder region and the other hand used to support the animal from below. These animals do not really like being handled, so should only be touched if absolutely necessary. Sharp claws may scratch and the tail is sometimes used to 'whip' a potential threat. This same tail is easily shed and should

not be grasped. Once shed, however, a new tail will grow in time. Some individuals may nip but this is rarely a serious matter if the lizard is small. Larger animals should be treated with caution until it is certain they are tame.

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. Depending on the size of the animals and the density at which they are kept, six to eight 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 wait until some experience is gained. In any case, some of the very informative books on reptiles in general and lizards in particular could be investigated.

### ...Food & Feeding

Iguanas are properly described as being omnivorous but the majority of the diet should be vegetarian. Insects and other animal items are eaten but in the wild these form only a minor part of the diet. Captive animals should reflect this situation and food like crickets and mealworms should only constitute about 5% of the diet. The other 95% should be made up of leafy vegetables with some salad and fruit. Things like cabbage, kale, grated carrot and apple are typical things to offer. In fact anything may tempt the lizard and as long as it is edible, as much variety as possible is appreciated. To balance the vitamin and mineral content, sprinkle the food with *Reptavite* as this is specially formulated for vegetable diets. Insects, on the other hand, should be dusted with *Repton*, a different vitamin and mineral supplement. Alternatively the insects can be 'loaded' by feeding *Cricket* and *Mealworm Diet Plus* but do not do both! Other insects that are eaten include Waxworms but these are best given only occasionally as a treat.

Feed the lizards every day with just enough to be completely eaten by the time of the next feed. It is also possible to use one of the popular formulated diets like frozen and dry iguana diets. Once tame the lizards will accept moving morsels offered in tweezers or tongs. Here is a chance to use thawed, frozen rodent pups as an occasional treat.

A large water dish kept full of fresh water should always be available. The lizards will drink and will wish to bathe in fresh water from time to time. The water will need frequent changing as the animals will use their bath as a lool!

### ...Reproduction

Most male lizards are proportionately larger than the females and they have broader heads. They also have more pronounced dewlaps and spiny crests. On the underside of each hind leg is a row of wax secreting pores that are very much more obvious in males.

A period of courtship proceeds mating and during this time much activity can be expected. 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 may be needed to condition the lizards for breeding in the following season. Some reading and research will provide the details.

### ...Health & Disease