

# Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

## Colombian Tegu or Golden Tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*)

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Colombian Tegus are found throughout central South America. They are large and powerful lizards and can reach 3 ½ feet in total length and males are larger than females. These lizards prefer a tropical habitat and they do not hibernate. Colombian Tegus are known to be more aggressive than other types of Tegus and may take some work to tame. With proper care you can expect your Tegu to live 10-15 years or more.

### Temperature and UV Lighting

Colombian Tegus should be maintained between 85-90 degrees with a basking spot of 95 degrees. At night the temperature can drop to 70 degrees. Hours of daylight should be 12L/12D during a 24 hour period. Humidity should also be maintained at 60-80%. Tegus require 12-14 hours of UVB light for proper health and growth. This light enables the Tegu to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D3 produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes a Tegus' bones hard and without it they can die. This process of inadequate UVB and calcium is called Metabolic Bone Disease. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.



### Housing

Baby Tegus can be kept in a 29 gallon cage but they grow quickly and will soon need larger housing. Adult Tegus should be kept in a cage that is at least 6' long by 2' deep. Females can be kept in smaller enclosures.

### Bedding

Our recommendation for bedding is bark or some type of mulch. This type of substrate holds moisture very well, allowing a higher humidity. Cages that are too dry can cause dehydration and shedding problems. When your lizard is shedding we recommend that you mist the cage with water once a day to increase humidity. Dry shed is the result of low humidity and dry skin can cause the loss of toes if it is not removed. The bedding should be deep enough to allow your Tegu to dig and bury itself.

### Calcium

Tegus also require a calcium and vitamin supplement. This supplement works with the UVB light allowing the lizard to receive the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. This should be used every day as babies and reduced to 1-2 times a week as adults. Calcium is sold in a powder form and is sprinkled on the insects and vegetables that you feed your Tegu. If you're feeding your Tegu rodents no supplementation is needed. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

### Food

Colombian Tegus generally feed on mice, rats, snails, hard-boiled eggs, crickets, super worms, night crawlers, beef heart, and sometimes fruits and vegetables. A mixed diet of these food items, four to five times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health.

### Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month and fresh clean water should be provided at all times. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Colombian Tegus can be handled on a daily basis but take some work to tame. Never pick your Tegu up by the tail, unlike monitor lizards, Tegus can lose their tail. Broken tails do regenerate but will never look as good as the original. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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**Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085**

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