

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Day Geckos (Phelsuma sp.)

General Information

There are many different species of day geckos that inhabit Madagascar and several other island groups in the Indian Ocean. Day geckos are arboreal and can be found in the trees or other vegetation hunting for food. These geckos do not have any eye lids and use their tongues to clean their eyes. Day geckos are small lizards and vary in size between species. The larger geckos such as the Standing's day gecko (*Phelsuma standingi*) and the Madagascar giant day gecko (*Phelsuma madagascariensis grandis*) can grow up to 12 inches in length. Other species of day geckos range from 4-9 inches in length. With proper care you can expect your gecko to live 10-25 years or more. Day geckos are sexually mature within one year and sexing is fairly easy. Male geckos have enlarged femoral pores on the underside of their back legs. Another distinguishing characteristic of males is enlarged bulges near the vent. It is best to keep one male with two or three females in a terrarium. Gravid females will lay their eggs somewhere on the cage floor or glue them to the surface of the glass or branches. Only certain species glue their eggs, such as the Standing's day gecko, most geckos do not. When properly incubated day gecko eggs will hatch within 70 days.

Temperature and UV Lighting

Day geckos require temperatures under the heat light to range from 84-90 degrees and night time temperatures can range from 70-75 degrees. Standing's day geckos require warmer temperatures and require a basking spot that ranges between 94-100 degrees. Proper temperature allows day geckos to properly digest food and allows the immune system to function normally. Day geckos require 12-14 hours a day of UVB light. This light enables the lizard to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes geckos bones hard and without it they usually 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.

Calcium

Day geckos 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 that you feed your gecko. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

Housing

Day geckos require a cage that has a lot of climbing room. Vertical cages are an excellent choice and you should provide multiple hiding spots. Cages can also be set up with live plants for a naturalistic appearance.

Food and Water

Day geckos should be fed appropriate sized crickets, mealworms, waxworms, and superworms. You should also include some fruit such as mangos, bananas, and fruit baby foods. A mixed diet of these food items, 4-6 times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health. Provide a water bowl at all times and mist the cage daily. Most day geckos will drink the droplets of water off the cage walls and vegetation.

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. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Day geckos are usually nervous captives and are extremely fast. It's best to handle them as little as possible and remember their tails break off.



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