

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Jackson's Chameleon

(*Chamaeleo jacksonii*)

General Information

Jackson's chameleons originate from Kenya and Tanzania in Africa. These chameleons are also found in Hawaii, but are not indigenous to that state. In the early 70's a group of Jackson's chameleons were released on the Oahu and they have flourished there ever since. These chameleons are found at high elevations with high rainfall and cloud cover. Males can be distinguished from females by the presence of three horns on the head. These horns are used for combat with other males that enter a Jackson's chameleons' territory. Adult males can range in size from 9-12 inches, while females can reach 6-9 inches. It's best to keep both sexes separate from each other unless you are attempting to breed them. Jackson's chameleons have live birth and once a female is sexually mature she can produce 10-50 babies. Typically once a female is pregnant it will take 6-10 months before the babies are born. This can fluctuate slightly depending on the air temperature while she is pregnant.



Temperature and UV Lighting

Jackson's chameleons are a mountainous species and require temperatures under the heat light to range from 78-85 degrees and night time temperatures can range from 60-70 degrees. Proper temperature allows Jackson's chameleons to properly digest food and allows the immune system to function normally. However, make sure that the temperatures do not get too hot otherwise you will stress your pet and possibly kill it. These chameleons require 12-14 hours a day of UVB light. This light enables the chameleon to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes a chameleons' 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

Jackson's chameleons 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 chameleon. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

Housing

Jackson's chameleons require a cage that has a lot of climbing room and require more ventilation than most reptiles. Baby chameleons can be housed in a 10 gallon terrarium or in a screen cage such as ESUs' Fresh Air Habitat. Adult Jackson's chameleons should be housed in a cage with at least two sides screen and measuring 36" tall and 18" x 18" of floor space.

Food and Water

Jackson's chameleons should be fed appropriate sized crickets, mealworms, waxworms, and superworms. A mixed diet of these food items, five to seven times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health. Chameleons do not usually drink standing water and prefer to drink droplets of water off themselves or vegetation. We recommend that you mist Jackson's chameleons 2-3 times a day. Humidity should be maintained between 50-80 percent.

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. Jackson's chameleons can be handled on a daily basis and usually tame down quite well. Babies should be handled as little as possible during the first couple of months to allow them to completely adjust to their new surroundings. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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