



Husbandry Handbook

VEILED CHAMELEON

Chamaeleo calytratus

A Camouflaged Tree Dweller

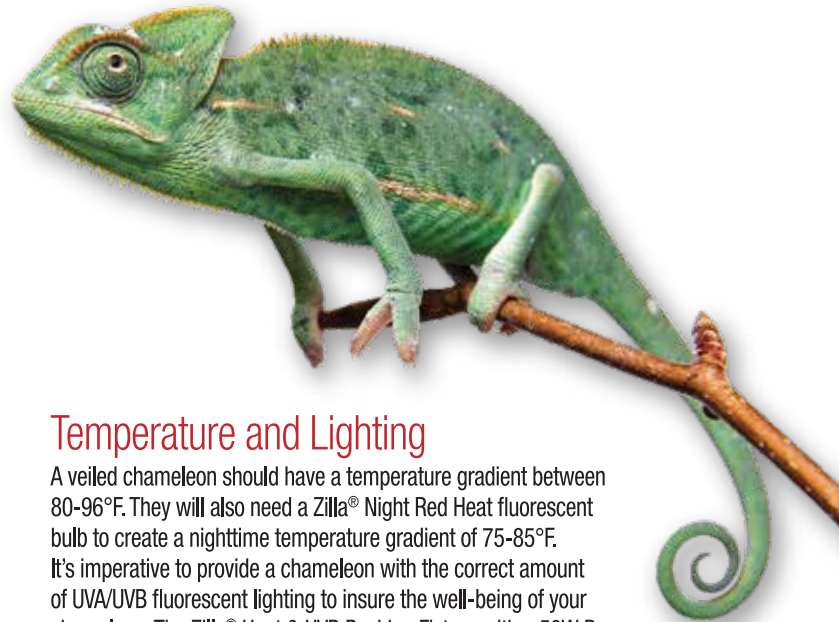
As one of the largest mainland chameleons in the world, the veiled chameleon is one of the most popular pet reptiles because of its spectacular coloration. These chameleons' base color is green with brown, reddish-orange, or blue stripes. They also have a prominent vertical crest or casque. Although more research is necessary to fully understand the purpose and function of the casque, it tends to be used for reproductive behaviors and displays as well as an act of aggression towards predators. Their zygodactylus feet and prehensile tails improve their ability to climb and grip branches. Chameleons also have a pair of independently operating eyes that give them improved depth perception and motor coordination.

Habitat

These chameleons are native to Yemen and southern Saudi Arabia. Although they are arboreal, they can be found in dry plateaus, coastal plains, mountains, and river valleys. Veiled chameleons are highly territorial and avoid coming into contact with other veiled chameleons.

Housing

Housing must be completely sealed, ventilated, and escape proof. Zilla® Fresh Air Screen Habitats are preferred but glass enclosures may be used depending on your household's average temperature. Juvenile chameleons can be housed in a small screen habitat until they are roughly six to eight months old. Adult chameleons should be kept in large screen habitats. Providing a substrate is optional as chameleons will rarely use it since they are arboreal. If you would like to use a substrate, Zilla® Jungle Mix, Coconut Husk Brick or Terrarium Moss can be used. Chameleons require vertical artificial foliage, branches, logs, and other furnishings to meet their climbing, basking and hiding activities. These chameleons will not recognize standing water and should be misted by hand to receive adequate hydration. Waterfalls may be used to provide an adequate water source but misting is still recommended. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at least every 2-3 months.



Temperature and Lighting

A veiled chameleon should have a temperature gradient between 80-96°F. They will also need a Zilla® Night Red Heat fluorescent bulb to create a nighttime temperature gradient of 75-85°F. It's imperative to provide a chameleon with the correct amount of UVA/UVB fluorescent lighting to insure the well-being of your chameleon. The Zilla® Heat & UVB Basking Fixture with a 50W Day Blue Zilla® Mini Halogen Bulb and Zilla® Pro Series Desert Fluorescent Coil Bulb will provide enough heat and light for your chameleon. Without the use of proper lighting, they can develop abnormal bone growth and Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD).

Feeding and Diet

Veiled chameleons are insectivorous and can be fed crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms and waxworms. Feeder insects should given Zilla® Gut Load Cricket Drink with Calcium(?). When feeding, spray the insects with Zilla® Calcium Supplement 1-2 times weekly for additional calcium and Vitamin D3. Supplementing calcium is necessary in order to prevent metabolic bone disease. It's important to not overfeed chameleons as obesity and other health issues may occur.

Handling

Veiled chameleons will generally not tolerate frequent handling as it can cause a high degree of stress. Should a chameleon be handled, it should not be forcefully picked up. Allow the chameleon to walk onto your hands. Chameleons are best suited as a display animal.

Be sure to wash your hands after handling any animals.

