



Husbandry Handbook

DAY GECKO

(Genus: *Phelsuma*)



Arboreal Reptile Peacocks

Day Geckos are an incredible group of small lizards from Madagascar and surrounding islands, and one species comes from mainland Africa. They are one of only a few groups of diurnal geckos. Active throughout the day, these brightly colored geckos spend their time defending their territory from other geckos. They exhibit a wide range of head bobbing and tail wagging behaviors which is how they communicate with other geckos. While their bright neon green base color and patterns of red, yellow, blue, black, and reds are striking and stand out brightly, they still disappear into the foliage of a tree when hiding. These quick and beautiful geckos make amazing terrarium inhabitants and are now regularly captively bred by hobbyists across the country.

Habitat

Found throughout Madagascar and surrounding islands, these geckos live in tropical island habitats and spend the majority of their time in trees and the walls of buildings. While human sprawl has pushed many species to interact with people, these geckos are highly resourceful and adaptable continuing to thrive in even suburban environments. They have been found in Hawaii, Florida, and other areas in the world where they are an invasive species, but their specific husbandry needs keep them from becoming invasive in most places.

Housing

Day Geckos require sealed and escape proof housing. As babies, they can start out in a Zilla® 12"x12"x20" Front Opening Terrarium. It's important to remember that as they grow and develop, they will require larger accommodations. Small species such as Gold Dust Day Geckos can live comfortably as adults in a Zilla® 12"x12"x20" Front Opening Terrarium or larger enclosure. Large species such as Giant Day Geckos will require a Zilla® 18"x18"x25" Front Opening Terrarium or larger terrarium. To maintain humidity in the enclosure use substrates such as Zilla® Jungle Mix, Zilla® Bark Blend and Zilla® Coconut Husk Brick. Arboreal branches and perches should be created for basking spots. Try Zilla® Vertical Décor to add arboreal décor to the habitat and feeding stations. These geckos will not actively drink from standing water and should be misted by hand to receive adequate hydration. Zilla® Waterfalls and Spring Cave can be used to provide a continuous water source but misting is still recommended in addition. Replace the substrate, as well as clean and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at least every 2-3 months.

Temperature and Lighting

Day Geckos should have a temperature gradient between 75-80°F with a basking area near 90°F. Since Day Geckos are diurnal it's imperative to provide them with the correct amount of UVA/UVB fluorescent lighting to ensure their well-being. The Zilla® Heat & UVB Fixture with a Zilla® 25W or 50W Mini Halogen bulb and a Zilla® Pro Series Tropical 25 UVB/UVA bulb will provide the correct heat and UVB needed. Without the use of proper lighting, they can develop abnormal bone growth and Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD).

Feeding and Diet

In the wild Day Geckos are omnivores and will eat fruit and nectar, but the majority of their diet consists of insects. In captivity they eat a variety of invertebrates such as crickets and dubia roaches alongside a staple of Crested Gecko Diet powder mix. Feeder insects should be fed a nutritional gut-load insect food and given Zilla® Gut Load Cricket Drink. By feeding these products you will increase the nutritional value of your feeders and help pass important nutrients on to your gecko. When feeding, spray the insects with Zilla® Calcium Supplement and Zilla® Vitamin Supplement 1-2 times weekly for additional calcium and Vitamin D3, along with other essential nutrients.

Handling

Handling of Day Geckos should only happen when absolutely necessary. One unique adaptation they have is their skin tears and can come off. This allows them to evade predators. They will heal, but it's painful for them and as their caretaker we want to avoid that. Babies can often be flighty. Remember that to them, you're a giant predator. Approach them slowly and pick them up from below when possible. Do not grab them and be sure not to grab their tail or it will drop off. While Day Geckos are beautiful and incredible animals and pets to keep, they are best to not be handled.

Also be sure to wash your hands after handling any animals.

