



Husbandry Handbook

MOURNING GECKO

(*Lepidodactylus lugubris*)

Like Mother, Like Daughter

Mourning Geckos have a unique way of reproducing! It is called parthenogenesis, a type of asexual reproduction, that allows Mourning Geckos and other reptile to reproduce without males. That's right, all Mourning Geckos are born female! Mourning Geckos are basically clones of their mothers who were clones of their mothers. Pairing this method of reproduction along with their tolerance for salt water, Mourning Geckos have an incredibly large native range and have become invasive all over the world, including Hawaii. These small and unique geckos have a ton of personality and that can be seen even in wild specimens.

Habitat

Mourning Geckos are native to Southeast Asia and Pacific islands, though they are highly invasive around the world and found in Australia, Central and South America, and Africa. Found in native forests and being scattered through urban environments, these arboreal small geckos are highly resilient to temperature variations and forgiving of most husbandry issues. Geckos live in highly humid and warm climates; 60-70% humidity can be achieved with regular misting.

Housing

Mourning Geckos require sealed and escape-proof housing. One or two adults can be housed comfortably in a Zilla® 12x12x15 Front Opening Terrarium. It is important to remember that as more Mourning Geckos are added to a group they will require larger accommodations to allow ample space for individuals. To maintain humidity in the enclosure use substrates such as Zilla® Jungle Mix, Zilla® Bark Blend or Zilla® Coconut Husk Brick; add Zilla® Terrarium Moss over the substrate. Arboreal branches and perches should be created for basking spots. Try Zilla® Vertical Décor to add arboreal height and feeding stations to the habitat. Mourning Geckos prefer to eat elevated off the ground. These geckos will not usually 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

Mourning Geckos should have a temperature gradient between 70-80°F. These geckos are hardy and cold tolerant down to 65°F. A basking site should be provided that maintains a temperature of 85°F. Mourning Geckos are cathemeral which means they are active during the day and night in an irregular pattern. It is important to provide them with the correct amount of UVA/UVB fluorescent lighting to insure their well-being. The Zilla® Heat & UVB Fixture with a Zilla® 25W 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 and supplementation, they can develop abnormal bone growth and other fatal diseases.

Feeding and Diet

In the wild, Mourning Gecko diets have a wide range that includes insects, flowers, sap, and nectar. In captivity they eat a variety of invertebrates such as flightless fruit flies, crickets, bean beetles, and small dubia roaches as well as a powdered crested gecko diet. Mourning Geckos do well when fed a crested gecko diet as a staple. Feeder insects should be fed a nutritional gut-load insect food and given Zilla® Gut Load Cricket Drink. 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. These supplements can be used in the crested gecko diet as well if insects aren't offered. By feeding these products you will increase the nutritional value of your feeders and help pass important nutrients on to your gecko.

Handling

Handling of Mourning Geckos should be avoided unless necessary due to their small size and agile, fast movements. When done carefully and in an area where they can't escape if they jump out of your hands, these geckos can be handled. Mourning geckos can often be flighty. Remember that to them, you're a giant predator! Approach them slowly and pick them up from below when possible. While Mourning Geckos are beautiful and incredible pets to keep, handling them should be done carefully and minimally.

Always be sure to wash your hands after handling or cleaning the enclosure of any animal.

