**Crested Gecko Care Sheet**

Crested Geckos are native to New Caledonia, an island off Australia. Crested Geckos are semi-arboreal, spending most of their time in small trees and low shrubs. They may, however, seek out hiding places near the ground to sleep during the day. Cresteds can be maintained in simple conditions or in elaborate naturalistic vivariums. Hatchlings to four month old crested geckos can be housed in 10 gallon aquariums or similar plastic keepers. Juvie to adult crested geckos should be housed in 29-gallon aquarium or larger. Keep in mind that regardless of what type of cage you use, height is more desirable than length or width, particularly with adult geckos. It is best to house geckos separately.

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Temperature, heating, and lighting

Temperatures for crested geckos should be maintained between 72 and 78 degrees for most of the year. At temperatures greater than 80 degrees, crested geckos will become stressed, which could lead to illness or death. Cresteds can tolerate nighttime temperature drops down into the mid 60’s but it is not necessary to provide this type of nighttime drop. Your gecko’s cage needs to be misted at least once a day, preferably twice. Humidity should reach 70% and then dry out before sprayed again. A cage that remains too wet can mold and create problems for your gecko.

A photo period of 12 to 14 hours of light is appropriate for most of the year. Don’t put cages in direct sunlight as this can increase the temperature too much and potentially kill a gecko. Lighting is most easily achieved with the use of fluorescent lights places directly on the cage top. This will facilitate both the requirements of the geckos and any live plants within the enclosure should you choose to have them. It is unnecessary to use UVB lighting for crested geckos, but I have found beneficial for breeding females. In most situations, room temperature is adequate for crested geckos.

Diet and Feeding

* The easiest and most convenient method of feeding Crested Geckos is to use Pangea, Repashy, Lugarti or BPZ diets. These diets have been formulated to contain all the essential fats, proteins, minerals, and vitamins that cresteds need. Mixing the diets is easy, in general use 1 part powder to 2 parts water by volume, instructions are on the packaging.
* Crested Gecko Diet & Insects: Crested Geckos can be fed the above diets along with crickets or other insects.
The best insects to feed are either crickets or feeder roaches. The insects that you offer your geckos should be no larger than the distance from the gecko’s nose to its eye. It is best to feed only insects that have been purchased or bred. Insects caught outside may carry disease or bug spray that can kill your animal.

I feed my animals new gecko diets every 2-3 days and bugs 2-4 times a month. It is vitally important when feeding insects to dust them with a calcium powder with vitamin D3. Your insects should be fed a high-quality diet prior to being offered to your geckos; this practice is known as gut loading.

Handling / Crested Geckos as Pets

Crested Geckos tolerate moderate to heavy handling even when they are relatively young. However, you should not handle geckos that are less than two weeks old, or geckos that have recently been purchased or moved. Any new animal purchased, should go through at least a 30-day quarantine period by themselves to make sure they are eating and active. There is a recommended 2-week acclimation period for newly acquired geckos, which allows them to settle in and get used to their new surroundings. Once they are settled in, you can introduce your gecko to handling a little at a time. Five minutes of handling per day for the first few weeks is sufficient to allow your gecko to become used to you and to become less jumpy. Once they are comfortable with you, you can begin to handle them more. If your gecko is jumpy or flighty, you can use what’s called the “hand walking” method. To do this, you simply hold one hand out directly in front of the gecko and allow him to hop, walk, or jump to the extended hand, and then you immediately place your free hand out in front again, and so on. Young geckos and newly acquired geckos typically need to be hand walked for several sessions before you can expect them to calm down. Crested Geckos can drop their tails if handled improperly, however most cresteds are reluctant to drop their tails unless the tail in pinched or squeezed somehow. Most tail loss occurs from aggressive cage mates or from accidentally closing the tail in a screen top or door. Careful handling does not usually result in tail loss.

Baby Crested Gecko Care

Baby crested geckos are cared for the same way as adults with a few exceptions. Babies should be misted twice a day and should not be over handled. Always allow newly acquired baby crested geckos to acclimate to their new cage before you begin a handling routine. The acclimation period is usually one to two weeks. Care should be taken to make sure hatchling geckos shed properly.