

ANIMAL TALK
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Leopard Gecko
Eublepharis macularius



Necessities:

- 10 gal tank
- Tank Top/Light
- Light
- Tank liner
- Under tank heater
- Moisture Chamber
- Coconut Fiber
- Calcium w/D3
- Vitamins
- Special Sand
- Crickets
- Decorations

GENERAL:

Leopard Geckos are one of our favorite reptile pets, especially for kids. They are a form of fat-tailed gecko native to the area from Iran to Pakistan. The ability to store food and moisture in their tail allows them to survive in these arid areas. Being a terrestrial lizard they lack foot pads that allow other members of their family to climb smooth surfaces. They can grow to 10 inches and live up to 20 years (which means that generally most parents will end up with their children's lizards when they go off to college). Their mannerisms remind you of a cat. When scared they will arch their backs and hiss. When you feed them they stalk and pounce on their food. Most of the Leopard Geckos available are females as sex is determined by the temperature at which the eggs are incubated. They may live singly or in groups of either all females or 1 male with females. Males cannot be kept together as adults as they tend to fight. When keeping more than one in the same cage, care must be taken to make sure everyone is of the same size and gets an equal opportunity to eat.

DIET:

Their diet consists primarily of crickets but mealworms, waxworms and other small insects can be enjoyed as a treat. Adults need and enjoy a pinky or fuzzy mouse regularly to ensure proper nutrition if they are going to be used for breeding. Insects should be gut loaded by feeding them a nutritious food formula designed for gut loading and then sprinkled with calcium and vitamins just before feeding. This is especially important for the young and egg-laying females. Leopard Geckos also eat a sand mixture (builder's sand) with calcium powder added to it (3 parts sand to 1 part calcium). This can be placed in a small dish or jar lid and replenished as needed. Fresh water should be available to them at all times in a dish that the crickets can get out of.

HOUSING:

As adults, Leopard Geckos are very slow moving and lazy. A 10 gallon tank with an incandescent hood for one gecko is adequate space. If you're wanting more than one it would be better to use a larger tank. A reptile heating pad attached to the underside of the tank and two 15w or 25w bulbs will generally produce enough heat in most households to keep the Leopard Gecko happy and active. They do like some seasonal variance in temperature, 70-80 degrees in winter, 75-85 degrees in summer. We recommend that only reptile mats be used to cover the bottom of the cage. In the wild they live in hard-packed sandy areas. When stalking and catching crickets in a cage environment they tend to miss a lot, getting a mouthful of whatever substrate is being used. This could cause sand impactions or blockages. The temperature will be different in different parts of the cage and depending on its needs, it may choose different sleeping spots. Decorations and hiding places will give it different choices in temperature and must be securely placed so that it cannot knock them over and injure or crush itself. The only sand in the cage should be the calcium mixture described above. Although desert creatures they generally sleep underground during the day in moist chambers. These chambers help them to shed properly. You must provide a moisture chamber for them. We generally use a sandwich container with a hole cut in the top, 1/2 full of coconut fiber and kept moist at all times.

HANDLING:

Handling of very young Leopard Geckos should be avoided as they are very fast and will drop their tail if grabbed improperly. This is a defense mechanism and it will grow back bigger and even more beautiful than the original, but it is very stressful. As they become larger they move slower and are easier for children to handle. They very rarely ever bite. Leopard Geckos are nocturnal by nature so do not be concerned if it sleeps a lot during the day. Red lights in the top will help aid in night viewing without upsetting eating and sleeping patterns. It also makes a wonderful night light! If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact us.