

Crested Gecko Companion Care Guide

Research Blvd
Pet & Bird Hospital



WHEN DO I SEE A VET?

- Annual wellness exam
- Not eating or pooping for over a week
- Open mouth breathing or noise while breathing
- Diarrhea, blood in feces, vomiting, or regurgitation
- Retained shed, redness, swelling, or open wounds of the skin
- Swollen eyes, swelling or bleeding of the mouth
- Tail loss or tail dropping
- Any health concerns or questions

Feeding

Baby: Once daily

Juveniles and Adults: Two to three times a week or as needed to maintain desired weight

Calcium and vitamin supplements:

Dust insects every feeding with calcium

Consult with your veterinarian to discuss the possible need of adding vitamin D3 to your calcium dusting as in some cases it may be beneficial or recommended.

Recommended Dusting Supplements:

Calcium:

Repashy Calcium Plus Reptile Supplement

Flukers Calcium without D3 and phosphorus free

ZooMed Repti Calcium without D3

Crested geckos are omnivores and eat an insect and fruit based diet. There are several appropriate methods to feeding juveniles and adults including offering 2-3 dusted insects one or two times a week with a fruit diet one to two times a week. Babies and gravid females should be fed daily for appropriate growth and egg development.

Maintaining a balance and routine diet is important to maintaining stable health in a crested gecko.

Main Insect Food Sources: (~90% of Insect Diet)

Crickets, dubia roaches, or grasshoppers due to low fat to high protein ratios.

Snack Insect Sources: (~10% of Insect Diet)

Mealworms, superworms, hornworms, phoenix worms, silkworms, or butterworms due to high fat or low protein.

Fruit and Other Food Options:

Mango, banana, strawberry, watermelon, pear, honey, blue berries, fig, peach, grape, apricot, and baby food mixes of these food options make great food options for crested geckos.

Common Illnesses

- Retained shed (Dysecdysis)
- Intestinal parasites
- Nutritional Secondary Hyperparathyroidism (Metabolic Bone Disease)
- Cloacal prolapse
- Eggbinding or dystocia
- Trauma and open wounds
- Renal disease
- Dehydration
- Tail loss or dropping

Is My Crested Gecko A Male or Female?

Crested geckos are not a dimorphic species, as adults, colorations can be universal from male to female. However mature males have distinct hemipene bulges that can assist in sexing. In addition, another reliable way in determining sex can be done by a skilled veterinary professional through several methods at a younger age including probing for hemipene pockets, endoscopic sex determination, and ultrasound sex determination. Listed below is what to look for to help determine sex in adult crested geckos.

Hemipene Bulges – Adult male crested geckos will have enlarged bulges around the ventral (bottom) aspect of their tail base just behind the vent. Females lack hemipenes and do not develop the same bulge seen in the males. For visualization of these bulges in a male looking through a glass or handling with the tail hanging off your hand can allow for visual access of the tail. It is important to NEVER grab the tail, as they are known to drop their tails in self-defense.

Husbandry

Enclosure Sizes

Babies: 5-gallon tank (16" L x 8" W x 10" H) or larger enclosure

Adults: 20-gallon high tank (24" L x 12" W x 16" H) or (18" L x 18" W x 18" H) terrarium or larger enclosure

Enclosures should have a small basking light, UVB light, hide area, fog and/or misting system, and décor to provide enrichment for your crested gecko. Crested geckos are arboreal reptiles that require more vertical space than floorspace space.

Housing

Crested Geckos can be housed in pairs in a 20-gallon enclosure or larger as adults avoiding two males in one enclosure due to risk of injury and fighting.

Humidity and Hydration

Ideal humidity for a crested gecko is 60-70% humidity throughout the day and night and during misting periods reach 80-100% humidity for a short period of time. Humidity should be monitored using a hygrometer inside the enclosure. Appropriate ventilation is recommended in all glass enclosures. Early morning fogging is recommended for 1-2 hours ending an hour before lights turn on. Timed misting throughout the day at intervals of 30-90 minutes is suggested to maintain daytime humidity and provided

Canopy/Décor/Substrate

Sterilized branches, bend-a-branch inserts, reptile vines, or cork bark are all acceptable perches and climbing materials in your crested gecko's enclosure. Plastic plants or live nontoxic plants allow for a canopy to provide shelter and security as well and enrichment for climbing around and surfaces to collect mist for hydration. Any plastic plant that is not able to easily fit into your geckos mouth is appropriate. A list of appropriate live plants is listed below. Appropriate substrates include Eco earth topsoil, coco fiber, and other bioactive appropriate substrates. Consult your veterinarian for more information on establishing a safe bioactive enclosure.

Recommended Live Plants:

- Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*)
- Climbing Fig (*Ficus pumila*)
- Dwarf umbrella tree (*Schefflera arboricola*)
- Money tree (*Pachira aquatica*)
- China doll (*Radermachera sinica*)
- Hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp*)

Enrichment

Feeding Dish— Allows your geckos to stay stimulated and seek out the dish in the enclosure for their insect or fruit food source.

Supervised Time Outside Their Enclosure —

Make sure to have a clean, item free area where you can supervise the activity of your crested geckos. Handling at this time is a great source of enrichment. Make sure no other pets including dogs, or cats have access to the gecko when outside its enclosure.

Lighting and Temperatures

Crested geckos are a nocturnal tropical species most active during the night or at dusk and dawn.

Lighting:

Ideal hours of daylight to nightlight:

12-14 hours on and 10-12 hours of "blue" night lighting

Recommended UVB lights include:

T5 Strip Lights:

- Arcadia T5 D3 6% UVB at 6"
- Zoomed Reptisun 5.0 UVB T5-HO

Recommended night lights include:

- Exo terra 25 watt Heat Night Lamp "blue light"
- Zoomed 25 watt Moonlite Reptile Bulb

Temperatures:

Basking Temperatures: 78-80°F avoiding 85°F or higher

Cool Side: 74-78°F

Nighttime Temperatures: 70-75°F

Avoid temperatures below 65°F due to risk of causing digestive issue and other illnesses.

a consistent source of water for proper hydration and drinking.

