

Medusa Exotics

CARE INFORMATION SHEET

LEOPARD GECKO (*eublepharis macularius*)

Leopard geckos are found in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. An adult will be around 8 or 9 inches long overall. They do not have adhesive lamellae on their feet, which means they are unable to walk on vertical surfaces such as walls or glass.

Housing

Leopard geckos can be kept singly or in a small group, if you are housing a group together, be sure to have only one male in the group, as two males will fight to the death. Very occasionally a female may be subject to bullying by the rest of the group, this may be a sign of overcrowding. If this happens remove the victim and house her separately. The enclosure for leopard geckos can be either a standard wooden vivarium, or a glass tank can be used. Ideally a single gecko will require a minimum size enclosure of 2ft x 15ins, be sure to allow more space if more than one animal is to be housed together. Ensure that the vivarium is secure and has adequate ventilation. Leopard geckos cannot climb vertical surfaces, but they are active and will appreciate things to climb on, such as different levels within the vivarium, rocks, branches etc. You should also provide a couple of hides such as small caves. Use a substrate in the bottom of the vivarium such as play sand or calci sand. Fresh water should always be provided. If you have a breeding group, the females will require somewhere snug and moist to lay their eggs, a cosy hide box lined with peat and/or moss will be fine. It is worth providing this anyway to give the geckos access to a humid hide to assist shedding of the skin.

Temperature and humidity

It is of vital importance to provide a thermal gradient within the vivarium, like all reptiles leopard geckos are cold blooded and they need to maintain their body temperature by using the environment around them. You therefore need to provide a warm side and a cooler side to enable the gecko to regulate its temperature. The ideal is 26c at the hottest point and 21c at the coolest side, with a basking area around 32c. The equipment you need to use to achieve the correct temperatures will depend on the size and type of housing, please ask for advice when purchasing your set-up. Leopard geckos are nocturnal animals and they do not require UV light, however providing a light of some sort during the day will give them a day/night cycle, also you can purchase infra red lamps to make the geckos visible to you at night time when they are active, the lizards will not be able to discern infra red light so this will not disturb them. This is optional, not an essential and so will depend on your own preference and on your budget.

Feeding

Leopard geckos are insectivores, requiring a diet of live insects. Suitable live prey includes crickets, locusts, cockroaches, mealworms, wax worms. Feed the insects before giving them to the lizard, this will increase the nutritional value and also the live food will last a little longer. Dust the insects 2 or 3 times a week with a vitamin supplement. (Our staff will advise you on suitable products.)

General care advice

Juveniles may be skittish and nervous to start with, but regular, brief and gentle handling will help them to become tame. It is unusual for these lizards to bite, they generally respond to human interaction quite well. As the animal becomes more used to being handled you will be more confident, and allowing your pet some time to explore the room under your supervision is the next step. Be gentle and patient and your efforts will soon be rewarded.

Leopard geckos are robust and healthy provided they are cared for properly should have few health problems. If you are concerned about your pet's health you should seek advice without delay from a vet who has experience of treating reptiles, do not wait until it is too late. You can expect a lifespan of up to 15 years if the gecko is well cared for.

Breeding

If you are keeping a group comprised of a male with several females, breeding will occur. Female geckos will produce 2 eggs at a time and will look for a suitable secluded place to bury them, if you provide a box as described above, this is the most likely place. Occasionally a female will choose her own nesting site and will pile up substrate on top of her eggs. The female may guard the nesting site initially but these are not aggressive lizards and you should be able to safely remove the eggs. Do not turn the eggs over or disturb them excessively. The eggs should be placed in a suitable incubator. (If you do not have one, we can advise on how to construct one, or we may be able to incubate eggs for you, please ask.) The interesting thing about incubating leopard gecko eggs is that studies have shown that the incubation temperature affects the gender of the young. Incubating at 26c will result in mostly females, 29c will give an even mix of male and female, 32c or more will give mostly males. This is useful to the commercial breeder who is more likely to want to control this. Incubation normally takes around 2 months. The young will be fully independent on hatching and after a few days will begin to feed on small sized prey.

Breeding will continue during the spring and summer months, females can breed several times during this period. However continual breeding can leave the females underweight and in poor condition, please be alert to this and allowing a weakened female some time alone to rest and regain condition is humane and will prolong her life.

If you have any queries or concerns about any aspect of caring for your geckos please ask our staff, also there are a number of informative books available to purchase.