**Crested Gecko**

Scientific Name: Correlophus ciliatus

Country of Origin: New Caledonia

Average Life Span: 15 - 20 years

Average Adult Size: 6 - 10 inches / 15 - 25 cm

**Housing Requirements**

Tank Size:

Crested gecko’s are an arboreal species so when choosing an enclosure for your crested gecko height is an important factor.

Hatchlings / baby crested geckos can be housed in a faunarium until they are around 7g. Once they hit the 7g mark you should look to move the gecko into a larger enclosure, it’s recommended to move them into a 30x30x45cm (12x12x18 inches) for a juvenile, and they can stay in this tank up to around 20g.

Any adult crested gecko / a crested gecko over 20g should be housed in an enclosure with the minimum dimensions of 45x45x60cm (18x18x24 inches) but the taller the better!

Please Note: the tank sizes above are for one crested gecko only, we do not recommend housing crested gecko’s together. Crested gecko’s are solitary / territorial animals they will not enjoy sharing their home with another gecko. Attempting to house crested gecko’s together will likely cause issues ranging from aggression, food deprivation and stress for your cresties, even if you do not see this happening it’s best not to take the risk.

Tank type:

Crested gecko’s come from a humid country so will require misting at least once a day in most cases to keep the correct humidity levels. The best option for an enclosure to ensure the humidity can be well maintained is a glass terrarium with a mesh top to allow the humidity to slowly escape allowing a drop during the day.

Humidity:

The ideal humidity for your tank should be around 80% at night with a drop to around 50% during the day. Any spray bottle can be used to spray down your enclosure but if you can find one with a nice fine mist it will probably make your misting duties a lot easier. We do encourage you to invest in a good digital hygrometer to keep a check on the humidity levels in your gecko’s enclosure as the dial hygrometers can be less accurate.

The ideal substrate for your enclosure is something to keep the humidity in the tank, coco coir mixed with sphagnum moss is generally quite good for keeping in humidity in your enclosure.

You need to avoid letting your enclosures humidity become too humid or too dry for long periods of time, not enough humidity can lead to issues with shedding, and too much humidity can cause respiratory problems so try to keep the humidity in the ranges above.

Heating Requirements:

As long as you can keep the room that your gecko is housed in at a steady temperature (this includes both summer and winter) that will allow for the correct temps in your tank you may not need heating for your enclosure, however you do need to check the temperatures in your tank to assess this need. The ideal temperatures for crested gecko’s range from 21-26 degrees celsius during the day (though preferably try to keep this between 24-26 degrees if possible), this can drop to around 20 - 22 degrees celsius at night with no issues. If your tank does drop below these temperatures you will need to invest in some form of heating for your tank. If you do need to buy heating a light is preferable to head pads as the light will raise the ambient temperature, however a heat pad will only heat the area that it is placed.

In addition to the temperature range above ideally you will have a gradient of heat in your enclosure to allow your gecko to self regulate, the top of your enclosure should generally be a few degrees higher than the bottom of your tank with lots of shaded areas for your gecko to cool themselves where needed.

Again we encourage you to purchase a digital thermometer so that you can keep a check on the enclosures temperatures.

UVB Lighting:

It is recommended to give your crested gecko’s UVB lighting, although they are crepuscular animals there is strong evidence that UVB is beneficial to crested geckos, as such we strongly recommend getting UV lighting for your gecko’s enclosure, for our enclosures we use the Arcadia ShadeDweller ProT5 kit - 7%. UV in these bulbs do run out, you can test this using a UV meter, however if you do not have one it is recommended to change the strip lighting every 6 months.

**Enclosure decoration**

A hidden gecko, is a happy gecko, you will probably hear this saying a lot in crested gecko groups but it’s used so often for a reason. As mentioned above crested gecko’s are an arboreal species meaning that in the wild they will spend most of their time up in the trees. When putting together a crested gecko’s enclosure it’s always best to try and keep the enclosure as close to being natural and that of a treetop environment as you can, be this with a bio active setup or just using lots of fake plants. Your crested gecko’s should have lots of leaves to use as hiding places and a couple of hides around the enclosure so they can always find cover to feel safe and secure.

Another must for a crested gecko enclosure is to have lots of branches, wood and thick vines for your crestie to climb on. Again think treetops when putting together your enclosure and your crestie will thank you for it!

**Diet and supplements**

Around 90% of your crested gecko’s diet should be a complete crested gecko diet (CGD), two CGD brands that are highly recommended for crested gecko’s are Pangea and Rapashy complete diets, they have most, if not all of the correct nutrients that your crestie will need. These diets usually comes in a powdered form, this powder is then mixed with water (a ratio of 1 part powder 2 parts water to create a ketchup consistency) and should be left in a bowl somewhere in your gecko’s enclosure. The CGD should be replaced every other day to keep the food fresh for your gecko.

The other 10% of your cresties diet should be gut loaded insects coated in a calcium supplement, this should be fed once or twice a week. If you provide your gecko with UVB then it is important not to use a supplement that includes D3 as this could lead to a D3 overdose. If your gecko does not eat insects try not to worry too much, you can try a few different feeder insects if you like but some cresties just aren’t interested and that’s okay, just keep feeding the CGD as normal.

Some pet shops or websites may tell you some incorrect information regarding your crestie’s diet, below are a few common recommendations that you should steer clear of at all costs:

Jelly Pots - Jelly pots are essentially just sugar, these should not be given to your crestie as they do not have any of the vitamins or nutrients that your crestie needs.

Insect only diet - crested gecko’s natural diet in the wild is mostly fruit with the occasional insect, again unfortunately insects will not give your crestie the complete nutritional balance that they need.

**Cleaning**

Even if you do not have a fully bioactive setup (with real plants) it’s recommended to get a clean up crew (CUC) to help with breaking down the waste in your tank anyway, this also reduces the need to do a deep clean of your enclosure as the CUC will do a lot of the work for you. Springtails and isopods help a lot with the breakdown of decaying matter (including your gecko’s poo) so they are generally a welcome addition to any setup.

If you have CUC in your substrate then you will only really need to do a clean of glass and other surfaces (such as plant leaves) around once a week just to remove any of the mess that your CUC cannot get to.

**Weight**

It’s a good idea to invest in a jewellery scale in order to keep a check on the weight of your crested gecko, ideally you should get one that shows weights to .01 of a gram to be able to keep accurate logs of your gecko’s weight progression. Don’t panic if your crestie seems to be taking a while to put on weight, all cresties grow at different rates and some are just slower growers than others. As long as your gecko is maintaining weight or progressing slowly and your setup is suitable then there shouldn’t be cause for concern.

Weight loss however can be a sign that something is wrong with your crestie, if you notice your crestie is losing weight you should make sure that the temperatures and humidity in the enclosure are within the correct ranges and that your crestie has been eating the correct diet. If all of these are correct but your crestie is still losing weight you should take the gecko to a specialist reptile vet to get them checked over.