



Division of Hooves and Claws

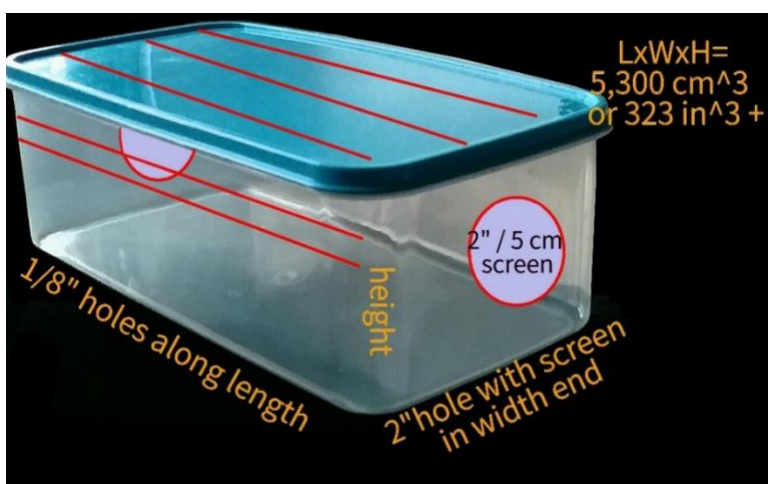
How to care for your new Crested Gecko

By Lynn Diebolt

If you are new to the reptile hobby, please do yourself and crested geckos a favor do not buy a hatchling or any animal under 9 grams, and get mentoring and read everything you can on raising crested geckos. They are more challenging in the Philippines if your house does not have air conditioning. It can be done, but you will need to take extra precautions and animals under 9 grams do not tolerate any heat stress at all, so that cute and less expensive hatchling, well please put it out of your mind for the sake of the gecko. More experienced reptile keepers are more likely to have greater success with younger animals



HOUSING: Housing your crested gecko can be as simple as a plastic box with locking or tight lid to a acrylic or glass cages. Geckos under 10 grams a box/ cage that is 5,300 cubic cm or 323 cubic inches (the size of a large shoe box) will work. As your gecko grows increase the size up to 15 gallons for a single or 20-25 gallons for a pair. Don't place holes to low in the box or any small insects you may feed will escape easily. Keep them in the upper 1/3 of the box. In the



ends place a 2" hole and cover with a screen. The screen should be affixed to the INSIDE of the box using aquarium silicone or you can purchase pre-made snap in screens for a more finished look. In bigger boxes you add more end vents and proportionally more small 1/8" holes on the lid and upper 1/3 of sides.

Once your cage has been bought or made, you need to decide if you are going to go bioactive or artificial. For young geckos and beginner keepers I highly recommend going artificial until you get used to keeping your gecko fed, hydrated, shedding properly and at the right temperatures.

In an artificial habitat you will need a hide either a tube about the size of a toilet paper tube or 1- 1.5" plumbing pipe and about 4 inches long or a coconut hut, and some drift wood (cleaned and sterilized) for them to climb on and sand off their claws that will grow very sharp and artificial flowers for your gecko to play, hide and hunt in. In a bio active habitat we recommend that you watch a few YouTube video on setting them up, but be sure your gecko is eating and drinking well before placing into a bioactive cage.



For substrate in a non bioactive cage paper towels work well. You can easily see how humid or dry the cage is, if your gecko is eating (you will see feces) and is a cheap easy to clean substrate and help monitor for any ant problems. Ants invading a crested gecko cage can easily kill a young gecko, so be diligent in monitoring and doing ant control around the perimeter of the room. NEVER spray pesticides in a room with your gecko in it, and never on its cage! Let room air out 24 hrs. after perimeter spraying and don't over spray or you can kill your reptiles.

FEEDING: I recommend Pangea crested gecko diet. It is well balanced, comes in several flavors (crested geckos can get bored of the same food all the time just as you would) is convenient, mixes and stores well in your refrigerator, and has less artificial preservative than other brands. Mixing the Pangea powder you add water until it is the consistency of slightly runny ketchup. For food dishes they can be as simple as the caps off of water or soda pop bottles (washed of course) to the nicer feeding ledges (that save time in changing the paper towel substrate as your gecko may decide to play and flip it's pop cap dish over.) You also need a dish for calcium and a water dish. Feeding the Pangea fruit mix every other day and insects (dubia/ lateralis roaches or super/meal worms 1-2 x a week will have your gecko growing nicely. Crested geckos also need to be misted daily. We have found here in the Philippines that misting in the evening and letting the cage have a couple of hours dry before the next evening's misting helps prevent stuck skin shed. Over misting and under misting are the biggest causes of skin problems in

crested geckos, so take time to figure out how much to spray each evening, so your gecko has 2-6 hrs. of dry time prior to re-misting. I HIGHLY recommend keeping a small water dish in the cage, as they DO drink from water dishes contrary to popular belief, and I have even found some deciding to take a soak in the bigger flatter dishes we occasionally use. Those dishes not in feeding ledges we have weighted by using silicon to glue a 50 centavo piece to the bottom of the dish, making it harder to flip over.



DUBIA



LATERALIS



SUPER WORMS

HEAT MANAGEMENT: Here in the Philippines during our summer months, managing the heat and temperatures for you geckos is CRITICAL. If a room gets above 29° C your animals will heat stress especially hatchlings. Their small bodies lose water too fast and they die of dehydration. So #1 when it is hot, your cages need to be kept moist more hours of the DAY and you need to find the coldest place in your home even if it is in your bathroom or under your bed. #2 easiest and cheapest way to keep cages cool is to use ice packs or phase 22 packs or the bigger panels in the TOP and towards one end of the cage. Your gecko will find the most comfortable spot if you keep it towards one end and at the top. If the packs are melting too fast and you do not have air conditioning then you need to insulate the cage and ice from the heat. This can temporarily be done by placing the bottom of the cage about 1-2" deep in a pan of cool water (you will need to add a cleaned rock inside the cage to weight it down so it doesn't float) then place ice in the water and on top of one end of the cage and cover with bath towels to insulate it and slow the ice melting. Another option is to use a water chiller. Attaching tubing to the out spout and running the water across the top or back of the cage in a coil and back to the chiller via a reservoir and an aquarium pump to assist the lift of the water back to your chiller unit makes an inexpensive cooling unit. Some tubing, hose clamps and silicon sealant and the chiller and aquarium pump are needed. Cover the tubing and cage not the chiller unit with either toweling or as a better more permanent solution use styrofoam insulation on 3-5 sides of your box keeping vent holes open will keep your geckos cool in the hot weather. If you are in need of a chiller unit, please contact us with the size and type of cage and we can build one for you or let us build a cage with ventilation fan and chiller unit together.

Other gecko keeping care sheets for references:

<http://thegeckogeek.com/care-general-info/>

<https://www.pangeareptile.com/store/blog.html>

<http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Care-Sheets/Lizards/Crested-Gecko/>