

Rhacodactylus leachianus - New Caledonian giant gecko Caresheet and bioactive maintenance

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Rhacodactylus leachianus - New Caledonian giant gecko

Leachianus geckos, or "Leachies" are known to be the largest arboreal species of gecko from New Caledonia, found hiding among the bark of the lush tropical rainforest. They are much like Crested Geckos which are also found on the same islands. These geckos have a similar feel to their skin like the Crested Geckos. Leachies have a beautiful, cryptic color range of greens and browns to blend in perfectly with their surroundings. This is one unique adaptation they utilize in their life to avoid predation or to hunt.

Being [crepuscular](#) they are active mostly at dusk/nighttime and use that time to hunt and forage for their main diet of fallen fruits, small birds, rodents and other geckos.

These geckos typically reach a length of 14-20+ inches. Some of the larger localities of leachies are a representation of "Island Gigantism." These geckos are known to live well past the age of 40 years. They are an active, intelligent, full of personality gecko for the wanting enthusiast.

What's needed for this large species you ask?

- Front-opening 18" x 18" x 24" glass terrarium (You will need a larger enclosure such as 24" x 18" x 36" for adults).
- [25w Zoo Med Basking Spot Lamp](#)
- [Exo Terra Reptile Glow Light, small](#)
- Plug-in lamp dimmer
- [Arcadia Shade Dweller 2.4% replacement bulb](#)
- [Bio Dude Solar Grow T5 HO Single Bulb Light Strip, 12" \(to house UVB bulb\)](#)
- [BioDude Glow and Grow 16" LED](#)
- [Zilla 24/7 Digital Timer Power Center](#)
- Temp gun
- [Exo Terra 2qt Mister](#)
- [Bio Dude Digital Thermometer / Hygrometer](#)
- [Crested Gecko bioactive habitat kit](#)
- [Bio Dude Crested Gecko Clean Up Crew Pack](#)
- [Bio Dude Crested Gecko Starter Plant Pack](#)
- Vines
- Branches
- [BioDude Lizard Ledge, x2](#)
- Small gecko feeding cups
- Crested gecko diet powder
- [Repashy Calcium Plus](#)

Terrarium size

For an adult Leachie, the minimum sized enclosure is a 24"Lx18"Wx36"H terrarium by Zoo Med or Exo Terra. Larger is always recommended for this species. They will quickly relish a larger enclosure as long as it is built correctly and has plenty of tight spaces and crevices. Smaller hatchlings and juveniles prefer being in smaller spaces and can go into the 12"Lx12"Wx12"H Exo Terra glass terrarium till they are large enough to be moved. Having a large bio active enclosure set up and healthily running before adding the geckos is recommended. This is due to their large and messy nature.

- hatchlings and juveniles
 - 12x12x12
- Sub-adults
 - 18x18x24
- Adult
 - 24x18x36
 - 36x18x36

Lighting

As they are crepuscular it is often seen that they do not necessarily require UVA/UVB. However, over the years new research has shown the benefits of offering UVA/UVB full spectrum lighting, as it aids in health benefits like digestion, proper D3 calcium and vitamin processing to prevent Metabolic bone disease and overall health.

In the wild, Leachies have been observed to put a small portion of their body within the sunlight reach to get the needed UVA/UVB and heat intake and return to hiding till dusk. For this reason, we recommend the 12" Arcadia Shade Dweller 2.4% UVB for the 18"x18"x24" enclosure. The basking branch should be 6" away from the lamp for the best Intake position, 12 hours a day. Always remember to replace this light every 8-12 months after turning them on, we recommend keeping a record with the date the light was turned on so it can be replaced on time.

Heating

Although it's very often to see Rhacodactylus care information stating they do not require heating, these geckos will actively use a 82° basking spot to regulate their body temperature for proper digestion and temperature regulation. The overall inside temperature as a whole should not reach over 83°. Leachies need a range of temperatures to happily thrive inside the enclosure. A lower wattage light bulb on a dimmer and timer will help achieve proper temperatures. We recommend a 25-watt basking bulb to start and work your way up as the temperature needs adjusted. The below temperatures are recommended for all life stages.

Day time basking 80°-83°F Cool side 70°-75° F

Nighttime 65°-75°F (heating at night is not required if temperatures are not below 65 in the enclosure)

Humidity

Leachies are from a tropical chain of islands, so they have a high humidity requirement of 60% to 80% for proper shedding. We suggest spraying down the enclosure twice a day, once in the morning and once at night with a sprayer or misting system, monitoring it using two hygrometers with the probe secured inside the upper enclosure in a cool area out of direct heat exposure to get better readings as well as one in the lower enclosure. Providing a shallow but wide water dish is a good way to not only always give the gecko an option for water but adding humidity to the enclosure. Waterfalls are not recommended with this species. Larger plants that retain water can also be used as opportunity zones. Plants such as Bromeliads, snake plants and other sturdy bodied plants make great foundations for opportunity hydration zones and humidity pools.

Substrate-

To achieve bioactivity with this species you will need to ensure you have a deep substrate with a functioning drainage layer. Leachies create a large amount of bio waste within the enclosure, so a well-drained soil such as Terra Fauna is recommended with the HydroGrow drainage layer. If you are planning a larger enclosure with Trees the Dude's Terra Firma can be used with the Super Grow drainage layer. Incorporating your essential bacterial and fungal strings with a substantial clean-up crew populations such as larger isopod species and tropical springtails are necessary for long term health of your soil.



Decorating

When setting up your enclosure it is very important that all branches and logs are sturdy and not able to fall over. Cork tubes are relished by this species and should have multiple options provided. Small trees such as Ficus or Scheffleras can be used. Sturdier dry woods such as Ghost Wood is a great branching opportunity. It is imperative to provide a mild basking area so if your giant decides to bask UVB/UVA and heat can easily be absorbed with whatever opportunity zones are established. Plants are a great way to offer coverage, opportunities enrichment, and add the natural look your bioactive craves. When your animal feels they have many areas to hid they will feel more comfortable in their environment and be more active.

Feeding

As a main diet Leachies relish premade gecko diets, such as Repashy or Pangea. Being crepuscular this species will mainly eat during the dusk hours. It is also recommended to also offer live food such as crickets, dubia roaches and even an occasional pinkie mouse for breeding girls. The feeding dish for the crested gecko diet or pangea fruit mix should be wide but not too deep as the gecko being heavy bodied is likely to knock it over. A magnetic feeding ledge will help with this. Adult Leachie geckos will go through 1.5-2oz of crested gecko diet every other day to every two days. Hatchlings should be provided fresh food and water at all times with day breaks of live prey such as crickets and small dubia roaches in a bowl. Feeding in the evenings is recommended as they are most active at this time. Supplementing your geckos with calcium powder and multivitamin dusted feeders or premixed diets is a good way to make sure they are getting the necessary vitamin intake for the best health. Gut loading with the Dude's Bug Grub is highly recommended for all insects as it fills your insects with the needed nutrients to help your Leachie grow properly.

Handling

While being called the "devil among the trees" by locals these geckos are easy to handle and typically do not have an issue with shorter handling periods. Being large they are easy to keep track of using the "hand to hand" method, passing the gecko from one hand to the other while it explores you as a moving tree. Leachies can be quite vocal gecko, making chirps and barks often expressing protest when anyone passes their terrarium. They might be testy at times during breeding season but that is normal for reptiles as a whole and should be expected.

The Dude Abides –

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