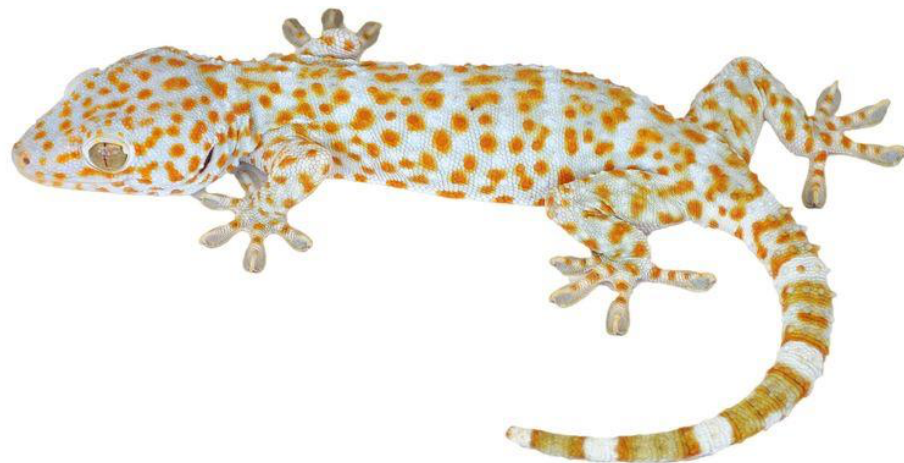


The care and bioactive maintenance of a Tokay Gecko

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Gehyra variegata

The Tokay Gecko is a large, slender bodied vocal gecko that has a striking light blue tone with red patterning when left alone with minimal stimuli. With proper stimuli, these geckos can gain a beautiful dark blue or dark green hue when fired up. Keeping these geckos takes patience, they are commonly called the "pit bull" of the gecko world for their fierce bite and hilariously defensive attitude. Their unique vocal call is also something a keeper can enjoy when housing this species.

Tokay Geckos come from parts of Asia, Indonesia, India and the Philippines. Their defensive attitude comes in part from being in the middle of the food chain to snakes, birds, humans, and other reptiles. Being very defensive, these geckos will bark and bite down so hard that their jaw can literally lock on whatever they are biting. For this reason, the Tokay gecko makes for a

better visual pet for keepers and handling should be avoided unless you are completely comfortable dealing with an aggressive species. Tokay geckos can live between 15-30 years of confirmed ages in some pet specimens, they can be a fun addition to any enthusiast's home. Creating a bioactive habitat for them is not challenging, but it will require space, time, a significant amount of biomass and clean-up crews to handle the excessive waste that these lizards create.

Requirements

- 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](#)

Wild Caught VS Captive Bred buying

Most Tokay Geckos available in the pet trade are wild caught and will come with the issues that wild caught animals can have. It is recommended to only purchase captive bred, there will be a need for deworming and monitor for any virus' or fungus' in a professional setting if not. Captive bred animals are much easier to acclimate in a bioactive terrarium, easier to feed and may have less internal issues than wild caught Tokay Geckos.

Terrarium size

Tokay geckos are a very active species that will quickly utilize a large, tall terrarium. Juveniles and adults alike will appreciate a large space filled to the brim with decor. Juveniles can be housed in the smaller sizes of terrariums till they are ready to graduate to a larger size. They are commonly found utilizing the enclosures wall space to suction and lay against. The minimum required for an adult is 24"Lx18"Wx36"H Exo Terra Terrarium, the front opening doors will help provide extra security with not stressing the gecko while providing daily maintenance. It is not

recommended to keep Tokay Geckos together. They can be very aggressive towards other animals and even opposite sex Tokay geckos.

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

Plant and UVB Lighting

Being nocturnal, these geckos will sometimes come out during the day to bask and absorb necessary UVA/UVB. A 5-6% UVB bulb is highly recommended to be utilized with a basking spot bulb. Offering UVA/UVB full spectrum lighting aids in health benefits like digestion, proper D3 calcium and vitamin processing to prevent Metabolic bone disease and overall health.

Any full spectrum T5 UVB light needs to be replaced 8-12 months after being plugged in as a requirement for use.

For your plants you will need a full spectrum light to help replicate the lush tropical forest in which a Tokay naturally resides. LED plant lights work best for highly tropical environments such as the Bio Dude Glow and Grow LED.

Heating

With Tokay Geckos being from tropical rainforests these geckos need a heat source that provides a solid basking spot around 82-84° and an ambient temperature of 75° on the cool side. Having the temperature gradient is best for the gecko's overall health to thermoregulate, being cold blooded. A schedule of 12 hours a day for both lights is optimal and can be simplified by using a timer. The bulb we suggest starting with an 18 x 18 x 24 enclosure is a 25w bulb and can be dimmed to help control the lighting with a thermostat probe secured on the hot side to read temperatures. The basking area should not be closer than 6" from the light. Red nighttime bulbs are not recommended to be used with this species.

To create a basking spot, simply have branches that can handle the weight of your gecko that is near/under the basking heat source. Be sure the UVB/UVA is also penetrating that basking area.

- Basking spot 82°-84°
- Ambient 75°-80°
- Nighttime 70°-75° (Nighttime heating may be required in the colder states during the winter if temps drop below 70)

Humidity

Spraying down the enclosure twice a day for about 20 seconds will offer a range of humidity variants for optimal temperature and humidity regulation. Suggested levels are between 50-70% with the ambient never dropping below 50% within the enclosure. Consistent high humidity 75%+ may cause bacterial, fungal, or respiratory infections. They will also utilize licking droplets off the foliage and glass walls of the enclosure. Setting up an additional misting system, such as a Monsoon or Mist King can help achieve this.

Utilizing a water dish -even though you may never see the gecko using it- is another way to add humidity. Having fresh water at all times is ideal. Bromeliads can also be used with this species as opportunity zones to rehydrate, sleep (for younger specimens) and to help with the local humidity around that opportunity zone. Checking humidity can be done with a hygrometer and the probe should be placed in a shaded area not in direct light as it will alter the result.

Substrate

To have a healthy and functioning bioactive substrate for this species it is imperative to use a drainage layer. At minimum, a 2 1/2" layer of the Bio Dude's HydroGrow should be utilized with the Bio Dude's Terra Fauna bioactive substrate. The Bio Dude Terra Fauna Kit is a great option as our substrate is designed to aid in holding humidity for the plants without stagnating. BioShot should also be utilized as it will implement your essential fungi and bacterial process that form symbiotic relationships with your plant roots.

Adding isopods and springtails as a clean-up crew will make this complete and help in cleaning the terrarium. Isopods such as Dwarf white or purple or even a larger Scaber species can be utilized. Tropical springtails will quickly populate within the enclosure. Providing fresh leaf litter and moss for bioavailability will be imperative for long term bioactive success of keeping this species. These geckos are dirty, and it is important to make sure your microbiological process

Decor

You will need sturdy decorations as they are arboreal, loving to climb and are enticing to watch explore at any given time. Being able to secure these items from falling over necessary to prevent tail drops or injury. The Bio Dude's cork bark flats and cork bark rounds are a good choice as they make perfect hiding places to make the geckos feel safe. They will typically suction to the glass upright or upside down behind a flat cork bar, or inside of a cork round. Cluttering the enclosure with foliage and many plants is the best way to ensure the tokay feels comfortable inside the new environment and acclimates easier. The more decor the better!

Plants

Plant packs for this active species are very similar to the ones used for Crested Geckos, offering more stable plants, height for them to climb, and cover allowing the inhabitant to hide. They stay appealing while handling the weight of being trampled by the exploring gecko. Our plant packs are grown organically and well started, getting The Dudes Choice while being chosen for a kit. Tokays love clutter, the more plants with sturdy decor the better. If the gecko can't be seen, It's a happy gecko! Plants such as pothos, philodendron, aglaonema, dracaena and even smaller

bushes such as schefflera can be used with success. Providing adequate light and drainage is necessary for plant health and growth.

Food

In the wild, these beasts of geckos will readily eat other reptiles, small mammals, small birds and whatever else they can get their strong jaws into. In captivity they will eat a variety of readily available feeder insects such as Crickets, Dubia roaches, Mealworms, Super worms, Hornworms, and heftier items such as pinkie mice can be fed on occasion.

Most will readily take feeders off feeding tongs once acclimated, but you may need to use a heavy bottomed food dish with things like roaches to let the gecko hunt on its own. Gut loading any feeders with The Dudes Bug Grub is suggested 24 hours before offering them to your gecko. As the geckos are mainly nocturnal the feeders will need to be dusted with a +D3 calcium powder since they cannot synthesize their own. If you do notice that your gecko basks often in the UVB, it may be necessary to utilize a calcium supplement without the D3. This will come down to the keeper and husbandry. Repashy's Calcium Plus is a great all in one supplement for this species. These will work with the lighting suggested to give the gecko the necessary vitamins and minerals to lead a long and healthy life.

Handling

While Tokays may look tempting to touch, their temperament usually does not match their beauty. Due in part to being a prey item and a very quick, active critter they are highly defensive and do not take well to handling. This is a stress easy species that has a tendency to bite and lock its own jaw on whatever it has chosen as its victim. They are a reactive animal with their sharp teeth leaving nice reminders of why they do not like to be messed with. With dedicated patience, moderate taming can be done over time.

A majority of the tokays available are imported and come in bad condition requiring months of rehabilitation specific care to get them in better shape. Handling during this time specifically should be avoided as it can result in more stress than needed. This is why we recommend searching out for a reputable breeder for a well started Gecko for your home.

-The Dude Abides

- Updated and fact checked July 22nd 2022