

The care and maintenance of a Crested Gecko

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An introduction to Crested Geckos:

- Crested Geckos aka Eyelash Gecko's (*Correlophus (Rhacodactylus) ciliatus*) are one of the many Gecko species that originate from New Caledonia, a group of islands between

Materials Needed:

- Front-opening 18" x 18" x 24" glass terrarium (You will need a larger enclosure such as 24" x 18" x 36" for adults).
- 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](#)

Fiji and Australia. Fun Fact #1, Crested Geckos do not have eyelids, just a transparent scale (spectacle) that keeps the eyes moist. Cresties use their tongues to clear away debris from the eyes.

- Crested Geckos can be a beginner pet and a great companion for a reptile lover. They are easy to care for and have a 15-20-year lifespan- with proper care. With proper supervision Cresties can make great pets for kids and adults alike. We do have to keep in mind, that as babies they can be a little jumpy and free jump often (the cutest) little thing. They can climb glass with ease and prefer a canopy style living. Meaning, in the wild Cresties will stay in the canopy and undercanopy portion of the rainforest.
- Cresties have a fine sandpaper feel to their skin and are not sticky or waxy. They come in many different morphs/paint jobs/color phases and patterns. Geckos can drop their tails at any point in their life, and they do not regenerate as other gecko species. This can be something as simple to them being startled suddenly, which can result in the Gecko dropping its tail. The Geckos can function without their tails; however, they might be slightly off balance after the first few days without their tails.

Housing Requirements:

- Baby crested geckos will be best housed in a 10 gallon (12x12x18) enclosure (or equivalent) with a screen top (preferably with a front opening doors'). An adult crested gecko should be housed in a 20 gallon enclosure (18x18x24) with the same above parameters- as a minimum. We would always recommend you scaling your enclosure size to the personality of your Gecko as the industry standard is a recommended size and not the only option.
- Setting up your Bioactive enclosure is very important; Terra Fauna is the best substrate for a Crested Gecko. Be sure to add the fuel for your bioactive environment, which are your biodegradables (ex. AAA Spag Moss and Leaf litter). After placing your drainage

layer, you will need to place the substrate in the enclosure and mix the Bioshot into the substrate. From there add in your biodegradables to the top layers. A screen divider is not needed with using The Dude's drainage layer however if you purchase a Fauna or Crested Gecko kit, one will be provided.

- All of our kits come with The BioShot. The BioShot is a combination of beneficial bacteria, fungi, and microorganisms that break down organic waste and add macronutrients to your soil and plants. It's easier to maintain and seems to work faster than the bugs. You can still use the bugs in addition to the Bioshot, but they are not necessary to be bioactive.
- Now that we've got the base layers done, adding décor is next. When scaping an enclosure we recommend to do so per the personality of your Gecko; however, industry standards would tell you to add many hiding places with heavy foliage. For example, if your Gecko is shy and likes to hide, adding more hiding places can be ideal. However, if you have a Crestie that enjoys venturing out and not hiding, less cover and dense foliage may be more ideal.
- A few plants that we recommend, are Pothosplants, Korean Rock Ferns, Bella Palms, Snake Plants, Bromeliads and Birdsnest Ferns. Cork tubes and hard woods; such as ghost wood and manzanita are great additions. With a larger enclosure even a Ficus tree would also be an awesome addition. Plants with large axils that retain water within their leaves are great opportunities for; drinking, humidity retention, and resting/sleeping areas.

Temperature/Humidity Requirements

- Crested geckos prefer temperatures of 75 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the day. It can drop to the low 70s at night. Which is an average room temperature, having a nano ceramic heat emitter for basking if the room temperature is too cool is ideal. To monitor those parameters' using the Bio Dude's Thermometer/Hygrometer is best.
- Water should always be available for crested geckos in a shallow dish to drink from. Your Cresties may not drink from the standing water and may prefer to drink when the enclosure is misted and that's okay too. These geckos also require an overall humidity of at least 50%- 70%. Daily misting will be required, twice a day for at least 30 seconds each interval; with Reverse Osmosis water. Reverse Osmosis water can be found at your local grocery store, in the water aisle- just read the label folks! Misting can be done by hand or with an automated system like, MistKing.
- UVB is required for reptiles in captivity, for a Crested Gecko we would recommend allowing your Gecko to be exposed to natural sunlight- however if that's not an option Arcadia UVB bulbs' are highly recommended. As Cresties are moreso active at night, a high UVB/UVA spectrum isn't required, therefore the Arcadia ShadeDweller 2.4% Arcadia bulb is a great choice. Arcadia UVB bulbs, unlike others will need to be replaced annually. Remember to keep all lighting on a day/night, on/off cycle.

Dietary Requirements

- It is a common industry standard to provide your Crestie with a powder diet like Pangea or Repashy which are great options. However, if you are looking to provide your Gecko the best, we suggest providing actual fresh fruit and insects. This is due to them not naturally coming across a powder "soup" mix in the wild.
- Fun fact #2, a few fruits that you can feed fresh are; banana, papaya, mango, strawberries, and watermelon- chopped or smashed well enough for your Gecko to

consume easily. A few good choice insects to feed are; Dubia Roaches, Crickets, Mealworms and Horn Worms on occasion (this is due to mealworms being difficult to digest because of their exoskeleton, and hornworms are fatty- these can be used as treats). Dubia Roaches are the best and provide the best nutritional value.

- If you are willing to be a part of the best Crested Gecko owner club; then you'll want to dust and gut load your feeder insects. We would recommend having both calcium with D3 and without, as well as a multivitamin. Crested Geckos should be fed at least 3 times a week (or as often as your gecko will eat and not be overweight). A feeding schedule as follows for example; feeding 1: calcium with D3, feeding 2: calcium without D3, feeding 3: multivitamin- the dusting should be very light, your feeders should not look like Polar Bug Bears! Calcium can be overdone, as is why supplementing with both with and without D3 is ideal, also a feeding without either calcium or multivitamins is okay as well.

You can also have the dusting on a weekly schedule; week one dust, week two no dust, so on and so forth. You will want to feed your feeders a good diet as well. Fun Fact #3: what your bugs eat will go into your Gecko. The best option for feeding your feeders is to utilize the Dude's Bug Grub- which can be used wet or dry. If using dry, simply sprinkle the powder on a dish that the bugs can get to and provide a water source, such as water crystals. If using wet, no external water source is needed, simply add equal parts hot water and Bug Grub (1:1)- roll into a ball and place the ball into the enclosure- and you're done. Make sure to store Bug Grub, calcium, and vitamins in a dry place for safekeeping. Also make sure to keep Lassie and Garfield away from these items as well.

Maintaining your terrarium:

- Let's talk impaction; come close for those sitting in the back and listen up. Fun fact #4. Impaction is caused by poor husbandry. Impaction is caused by Poor Husbandry! Impaction is caused by POOR HUSBANDRY!! What is poor husbandry you ask; well we're glad you asked.
- Improper diet, lighting, heating, watering, and substrate can all cause impactions. Letting your reptile hunt or forage is the most natural behavior and that's what a bioactive environment promotes-natural behavior's. Feeding your gecko inside the enclosure is no problem. This issue comes in to play when the above improper care is taken. Naturally, a reptile may ingest substrate in the wild and are able to pass the substance no problem, because they are exposed to the sun for proper bone and metabolism development. Whereas in captivity we as keepers provide the required, lighting, water, food, and heat. When we fail to do such things, our reptile's may develop suppressed immune systems, weak digestive systems, poor bone development and inefficient overall growth with homeostasis being consistently affected. With those factors, when substrate is ingested impaction can happen because we, as keepers, have given our reptiles a death-note with improper care. We are not saying to monitor your reptiles feeding, we are saying with proper care ingesting a little dirt on a roach or cricket isn't a death sentence, when speaking about organic material- we do not ever recommend allowing your reptile to ingest synthetic materials such as calcic sand.
- Daily misting is a part of the upkeep of your enclosure and Gecko, Terra Fauna is designed to hold humidity and allow for proper drainage- with daily misting a drainage layer is needed with Terra Fauna as it is water retentive. The Dude's drainage layer is

designed to collect excess water in a tropical environment, allowing for no bad bacteria to build up due to stagnate water in the substrate. This also helps prevent the substrate from becoming waterlogged (excessively filled with water). Water will flow down through the substrate into the drainage layer and evaporate naturally.

- A thin layer of biodegradables, as before mentioned is your fuel for the bioactive environment. They need to be replaced as they are broken down- this has no direct timeframe but when your substrate starts to look back like pure dirt- add more, a handful of both will suffice.
- The beauty of a bioactive setup is that you will never need to change the substrate when using the Dude's; Terra Sahara, Firma, Flora, Fauna, and Aranea - in combination with the BioShot. The BioShot is a combination of beneficial bacteria, fungi, and microorganisms that break down organic waste and add macronutrients to your soil and plants, and all our kits come with The BioShot. You will, however, need to replace the biodegradable (ex. spag moss, leaf litter) as they are broken down, as stated before.

In short, The Dude's self-cleaning system is designed to provide the best for your reptile, using research driven practices and techniques at your fingertips. To clean or not to clean, that is the question! The choice is yours.

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