



DarkSide Dragons

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Baby Crested Gecko (*Rhacodactylus Cilatus*) Care Sheet

Thank you for purchasing your Crested Gecko from us. Please take the time to review this information carefully; following our instructions will ensure you raise a happy and healthy pet.

Introduction

Crested Geckos, also known as eyelash geckos, come from a small island east of Australia called New Caledonia. Until as recently as 1994 they were thought to be extinct, however they were re-discovered and have been captive bred since. Cresteds are semi-arboreal, meaning they live in both trees and low-laying bushes and shrubs. They are nocturnal and like to find a secure hiding spot to curl up and sleep during the day, becoming active at nightfall.

Cresteds come in various colour/pattern combinations known as “Morphs”. Shades of yellow, orange, red, olive green, brown are common, along with varying patterns known as Dalmatian (spotted), Fire, Harlequin, Pinstripe, Tiger/Brindle and patterns can also be combined for endless possibilities. Cresteds can also change their colour to a certain extent. Their colours can get brighter at night or when excited and are usually duller throughout the day when sleeping.

Being omnivores, Cresteds eat a variety of insects and fruit in the wild. In captivity, they eat a specially-prepared **Crested Gecko Diet (CGD)** manufactured as a powder that is mixed with water at home to form a paste that is 100% nutritionally complete. Here in Canada, the two most popular CGD is **Repashy** and **Clark’s**.

Temperament wise, Cresteds are curious and tame nicely with careful handling. They like to jump, so handling must be done from a sitting position as close to the ground as possible. They can also drop their tails from improper handling.

Choosing a Gecko

When deciding to purchase a Crested Gecko, be sure to look for a gecko that is alert, not too thin, has bright clear eyes and all its toes and tail. Please note that a tailless gecko can also be a perfectly happy and healthy gecko as well, as long as the stump is well healed. Cresteds do not regenerate their tails.

Also keep your eyes open for any scrapes or bite marks on the skin. Shed skin can also build up around the toes of Cresteds when not provided with a sufficiently humid environment. Do not buy a gecko that is too young, you want a gecko that is well established and is eating both its CGD and crickets.

Housing

We recommend a vertical-style terrarium, similar to the 12x12x18 inch Exo-Terra pictured here:



This size terrarium will serve as a modest home to a crested gecko for life. If you like, once your gecko is one year old you may upgrade to a 20 gallon high tank or the larger, 18x18x24 inch Exo-Terra.

Use lots of decorations. For simplicity, I recommend using artificial plants. There are a large variety of beautiful plastic terrarium plants available in the market today, you are sure to find something you like. The **more numerous and thicker** the plants the better. Include something to climb on like some bamboo sticks, and along with some thick artificial vegetation you have a perfect home. Your gecko will curl up in the leaves and sleep during the day, so no hide is necessary.

For **substrate**, we recommend paper towel, newsprint, or shelf liner for babies. Do not use any coco-fibre, forest/jungle bark or Cyprus mulch yet. Young crested are very clumsy and you risk your baby ingesting too much substrate when they hunt their food. If this kind of substrate is ingested, it can cause impaction and death. Not worth it. **Stick to paper towel, newsprint or shelf liner.**

We do not use any artificial lighting/heat for our crested. Room temperature is sufficient. Be careful not to place your terrarium in front of a sunny window. The temperature inside a glass terrarium when placed in front of a sunny window will cook your gecko. The ideal spot will receive ambient lighting and remain room temperature – between 72-80F or 22-26C. As long as these conditions can be met you do not require any additional light or heat.

Feeding

Crested Geckos are among the easiest reptiles to feed. Don't like keeping crickets in the house? No problem! Cresteds are happy to eat their **Crested Gecko Diet** (CGD here on) as it is nutritionally complete. However, crested do enjoy hunting crickets and we believe it is important to give your gecko a few (3-6) crickets a week - not just for the protein, but for the exercise it provides them.

DarkSide Dragon's crested eat **Clark's CGD**. It is a powder that when mixed with water forms a nutritionally complete paste. Geckos lap it up from a small container – we use pop bottle lids! Just be sure to follow directions on the container. Repashy is another popular CGD; however we find our

geckos prefer Clark's. You may also mix CGD and fruit-based baby food. Be sure to use fruit only baby food with no added sugar. We find our geckos enjoy the Mixed Fruit variety the best. Other popular ones are Apricot, Peach and Pear. We feed CGD every other evening, leaving the evenings before meal in the enclosure. As mentioned above, for food bowls, we use pop bottle caps. These are the perfect size and there is little waste. If you choose to feed crickets, we recommend once or twice a week providing your gecko with 3-6 appropriately sized gutloaded crickets coated in a reptile calcium powder. We recommend ZooMed Calcium with VitD. Gutloaded crickets simply means to feed your crickets 12-24hrs before feeding them to your gecko. Good gutloads are vegetable kitchen scraps (carrot, potato, dark leafy greens) or cereals like rice krispies, cheerios, corn/bran flakes. Nothing sugary.

Water

Cresteds will not drink out of a water bowl so don't bother with one. Instead you must mist your crested's enclosure every evening. Use a spray bottle and give the enclosure a generous misting. The gecko will lick water droplets off the plants or sides of the enclosure. You should mist enough that the enclosure will almost dry out during the day, but not too much that it is soaked. **Mist every evening.**

Handling

For the first week, do not handle your gecko at all. Let him get used to his enclosure and become accustomed to his surroundings. After a week, you can begin to hold him for a few minutes and gradually extend the handling sessions as time goes by. Your crested will likely be jumpy and flighty at first, but will tame with time. Be very careful handling your gecko. They are fragile when small, and crested geckos are prone to dropping their tails when stressed. Tails do not grow back. If your gecko does lose its tail, it should heal over within a week or so and it will be perfectly fine. Just be sure to keep its enclosure spotless during the healing this time.

We are very pleased to have been able to provide you with your pet Crested Gecko. We do guarantee the health of your Crested Gecko for one week, provided our care recommendations have been followed. If you have any questions or concerns please call or email us as soon as possible.

