

Curly Tail Lizard

(*Leiocephalus sp.*)

Country of Origin	Caribbean
Average Size	Up to 10 Inches
Temperament	Fast and Active
Food Source	Livefood
Experience Level	Beginner



There are around 20 species of curly tail lizard in the wild. There are a selection of four of five regularly offered in pet shops in the United Kingdom. These all require similar care, although they range slightly in size and colouration, with the Jewelled Curlytail being the most colourful and attractive.

These are highly active lizards that originate from the Caribbean. They are not an aggressive lizard by nature, but the males are territorial and as adults, only one male should be kept to a vivarium to avoid fighting. When frightened or in attack mode, they will curl their tails up tight and then flick them out suddenly to attack. These are extremely fast lizards and very active, but they can be calmed down with regular handling. They grow from five up to eight or nine inches in length, and the males are slightly larger and more brightly coloured. They live for around five years in captivity.

These lizards will burrow beneath a substrate until they are completely covered. A deep substrate of bark chips is recommended. A water bowl should be provided at all times. These lizards love to climb and ample climbing branches and logs should be used. Once comfortable with their surroundings this is an active and inquisitive species, and care should be taken to provide enrichment as well as security, with plenty of branches, foliage and hiding opportunities. Although a small lizard, due to the high level of activity a vivarium of 24 x 18 x 18" is a minimum for a single lizard, and 36 x 18 x 18 is recommended for a pair or trio, to allow them to fully exercise.

A reasonable humidity of 50% or above would be ideal, room humidity with a water bowl in the enclosure is usually adequate, with no requirement for daily spraying. UVB lighting is required, with a recommended 10% due to the high exposure to sunlight in their natural habitat. The overall daytime temperature should be 85F rising to 95F in the basking spot. A night the temperature should drop to 70-75F.

These lizards will take a variety of insects – crickets, mealworms, and waxworms. Some will also take small pieces of fruit, or fruit flavoured baby food in captivity. This should be offered in a small quantity once a week to vary their diet. Food items should be dusted two to three times a week with a calcium and multivitamin supplement such as nutrobal.

The curly tail is an easy to care for lizard, but is always fast and active, and rarely tames down to frequent handling. They are beautiful display lizards but are not ideal for children due to their speed and skitty nature, although many do calm down with frequent handling.