

## Day Geckos



There are many species of day gecko currently being kept in captivity. They are attractive, brightly coloured arboreal lizards that hail from Madagascar, islands in the Indian Ocean, and some of Africa. The most popular in captivity are Giant Day Gecko (*P.m.grandis*), Standings' Day Gecko (*P.m.standingi*), Gold Dust Day Geckos (*P.laticauda*) and East African Day Geckos (*P. dubia*). Though they vary slightly in size and colouration, the care is very similar for all of them.

An arboreal vivarium is preferable for these species, and not much ground space is required. A vivarium of at least 24" should be used for a pair of the smaller species, and larger vivariums for the giant day geckos. These can be wooden, glass, or exo-terra enclosures, and day geckos can stick to almost any surface. The enclosure should be well planted, with either live or plastic plants, branches, and hiding places. A substrate that will not rot when kept in a humid environment is recommended. Soil can be used in glass tanks, especially if planting live plants, orchid bark is also suitable.

Daytime temperatures for all these species should be kept between 27 and 31 C with humidity at 50-80%. A large water bowl and daily spraying will help maintain the humidity. High percentage UVB is absolutely essential for these species, and without they will lose their colouration, and their health will suffer. 10% UVB is recommended. Lighting hours should be 8 hours in the winter and 16 hours in the summer to simulate the natural cycle.

A diet of gut-loaded live insects, and fruit, is ideal for these lizards. It is important to give some fruit in the diet and keep it varied. Organic baby food mixtures can be used, or apple, banana and berry mixtures can be crushed or liquidised into a bowl, from which the day geckos will eat. A multivitamin and calcium powder such as nutrobal should be mixed in with the fruit, as well as being dusted on the insects and provided two to three times a week, to ensure correct bone growth and calcium metabolism.

Day geckos are primarily active at dawn and dusk, but will come out and bask during the day. They are a fantastic display species, active and inquisitive, but handling should be kept to a minimum. They are fast, can jump, climb, and have very sensitive skin which can be damaged if held tightly and as such should be kept as a display species only.