



Crested Geckos

Correlophus ciliatus

BEGINNER · 7-9 IN ADULT · 15-20 YR LIFESPAN · NOCTURNAL · NEW CALEDONIA

The crested gecko was believed extinct until it was rediscovered in 1994; thirty years later it may be the most beginner-friendly lizard in the hobby. It needs no hot lamps, eats a complete powdered diet from a cup, and thrives at room temperature in a planted vertical terrarium. Expect a soft-skinned, big-eyed climber that lives 15–20 years.

AT A GLANCE	
Ambient (day)	72–78 °F
Warm spot	78–82 °F
Night	68–72 °F
Humidity	60–80% · evening misting
UVB	Optional · low-level beneficial
Diet	CGD powder + insects
Feeding cadence	CGD every 2 days, insects 1–2×/wk
Adult size	7–9 in
Lifespan	15–20 years



Crested gecko: believed extinct until 1994, now one of the most-kept lizards on earth.

Photo: Lennart Hudel / iNaturalist · CC BY

01

Temperament & Handling

Cresties are calm but spring-loaded. They don't bite, they leap. Handle low over a soft surface, let the gecko walk hand-over-hand, and keep sessions short. The cardinal rule: **never restrain one by the tail**. A dropped tail does not grow back, and while a tailless 'frogbutt' gecko is perfectly healthy, it's a permanent souvenir of one bad grab.

02

Housing by Life Stage

Height is the whole game: this is an arboreal gecko that sleeps in foliage by day and patrols branches by night. Start hatchlings in small enclosures where food and water are easy to find, then graduate to a planted 18×18×24 or larger. Cork rounds, angled branches and heavy plant cover make the difference between a hiding gecko and a confident one.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	6×6×12	8×8×12	Small quarters for the first months. Big tanks strand tiny geckos.
Juvenile	12×12×18	12×12×18	Move up around 10 grams; dense foliage cover is critical.
Subadult	18×18×24	18×18×24	Full vertical space for climbing and thermoregulation.
Adult	18×18×24	24×24×36	18×18×24 is the hobby floor; bioactive setups shine here.

Enclosure sizes in inches (L×W×H). Habitat-OS life-stage guidance.

03

Temperature: heat is the enemy

Room temperature is the target: 72–78 °F days, a gentle warm spot near 80, nights into the high 60s. What kills crested geckos is heat. Sustained temperatures in the mid 80s and above cause dangerous stress. No basking lamps, no heat rocks; if your home runs hot, plan for cooling before summer, not during it.

04

Humidity & Water

Mist well in the evening so the gecko wakes to droplets (that's how it drinks), then let the enclosure dry back toward 60% during the day. That wet-dry cycle matters: constant saturation grows mold, constant dryness sticks sheds. A hygrometer beats guessing, and a small water dish is a fine backstop.

05

Planting & perches

Coco fiber or a bioactive soil mix on the floor, pothos and other sturdy plants in the middle, cork bark leaned at angles up top. Live plants hold humidity and give crash-pads for a jumping gecko. Low-level UVB isn't mandatory with a D3-complete diet, but a small linear bulb sitting above the mesh measurably benefits them. Glass blocks UVB completely and mesh costs a quarter to a half of it, so the tube belongs above the screen, never shining through a glass lid.

06

Feeding

Commercial crested gecko diet (CGD), a fruit-and-protein powder mixed with water, is a genuinely complete staple. Offer a fresh cup every other evening, removing the old one before it sours. Add insects once or twice a week for enrichment and growth, especially in juveniles and breeding females, dusted with plain calcium that carries no D3 and no phosphorus. The CGD already supplies the D3, and one source of it is the safe number. Fruit is a treat, not a diet.

07

Health Red Flags

Heat stress is the emergency: a gasping, dark, lethargic gecko in a warm room needs cooling now. Chronic problems announce themselves slower. A kinked or wavy tail and soft jaw signal calcium deficiency (MBD) from an insects-only diet; stuck shed collects on toes and drops grip strength. Weigh monthly: steady grams are the best single health metric a keeper has.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual — when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.