



Tokay Geckos

Gekko gecko

ADVANCED • 10–14 IN • 10–20 YR LIFESPAN • NOCTURNAL • SOUTHEAST ASIA

The most beautiful animal in the room, and the one most likely to draw blood. Tokays are big arboreal geckos from Southeast Asia, blue and orange and completely unbothered by your opinion of them. They bark, they lunge, and they bite hard enough to break skin. Keep one as a display animal you admire through glass and you'll love it. Expect a pet and you won't.

AT A GLANCE	
Difficulty	Advanced
Temps (day/night)	75–85 °F / 72–78 °F
Basking spot	88–94 °F
Humidity	60–80%
UVB	Low output, optional
Diet	Crickets, roaches, waxworms
Feeding	Every 1–2 days
Adult size	10–14 inches
Lifespan	10–20 years



The blue-and-orange is the tokay's calling card. Captive-bred animals turn up at NARBC tables, and they start calmer than wild imports.

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01

What You're Actually Getting

Tokays are advanced-keeper animals, and the reason is behavioral, not technical. This is a loud, territorial gecko that barks its own name, gapes at movement, and delivers a bite that locks on and does not want to let go. Wild-caught imports are the worst of it; captive-bred animals are noticeably calmer, but calmer is not tame. Nobody should buy a tokay expecting to hold it. Buy one to watch.

02

Housing by Life Stage

All of it is vertical. Hatchlings start at 8×8×12 and grow into 12×12×18; adults need 24×18×36 at minimum, with 36×18×36 the size that actually suits a 14-inch climber. Fill the height with thick cork bark and branches, and latch the lid, because a gecko that walks on glass will find a loose one. **House them one to an enclosure.** Tokay fights end in torn skin and lost toes.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	8×8×12	12×12×18	Imports once dominated. Captive-bred is available now, so buy that.
Juvenile	12×12×18	18×18×24	Defensive already, and the bite is real. Handle only when you must.
Subadult	18×18×24	24×18×36	Fast growth on steady feeding; sexually mature around a year.
Adult	24×18×36	36×18×36	Height and grip beat floor space. Thick cork bark, top to bottom.

Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Every minimum here is a height number first, and not one stage of this species belongs in a rack.

03

Heat & Light

Ambient sits at 75–85 °F, basking at 88–94 °F, and nights drop to 72–78 °F. A tokay lives on the walls, so a bulb aimed at an upper cork slab beats anything warming the floor. Guard that bulb or mount it outside the mesh, because a climbing gecko will sit on it, and run it on a thermostat. Heat rocks have no place in the cage. Low-output UVB is optional. Add it as cheap insurance, or skip it and let a calcium with D3 carry the load.

04

Humidity & Water

Hold humidity at 60–80% and let it swing inside that band rather than sitting soaked. A heavy misting that dries down over the following day is closer to Southeast Asia than a permanently wet box, and stagnant damp air is how respiratory infections start. Run that misting in the evening. Tokays rarely use a bowl the way you expect; they lick droplets off glass and leaves when they wake, so mist until droplets actually form. Keep a shallow bowl anyway, and change it daily.

05

Substrate and Furniture

A moisture-holding substrate does the humidity work for you: coconut fiber, a soil-and-sphagnum mix, or a bioactive base with a cleanup crew. Skip loose sand entirely, and skip it twice for young geckos. What matters more than the floor is the furniture. Cork tubes and slabs, sturdy branches, and a few broad-leaf plants give a tokay places to wedge itself out of sight, and a gecko with good hides is a gecko that threatens you less often.

06

Feeding

Feed every one to two days: crickets and roaches as the staple, waxworms as an occasional treat, and a small rodent now and then for a full-grown adult. Dust with plain calcium, no D3 and no phosphorus, at most feedings. If you skipped the UVB, a D3 calcium replaces the plain powder once or twice a week. A multivitamin twice a month covers the rest. Use tongs, and not only for the food. A tokay that learns dinner arrives on tongs stops treating your hand as the delivery vehicle.

07

Health Red Flags

A tokay gapes at everything, so learn the difference between a threat gape and labored breathing. Clicking, bubbling at the nose, or open-mouth breathing at rest means respiratory infection, usually from a cage too cold or too wet. Watch also for shed stuck on toes and tail tip, a soft or trembling jaw, and a thinning tail base. Wild-caught animals need a fecal test on arrival. All of it is reptile-vet work, not wait-and-see.

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.