

CAL ZOO'S REFERENCE SHEET

CURLY TAIL LIZARDS

Latin name	Leiocephalus sp & Tropicurus sp	Maximum length	4 - 7 inches. (Includes tail)
Native to	Peru, the Caribbean, Cuba	Approximate life span	5 - 8 years

GENERAL INFORMATION

Curly Tail Lizards are a group containing about 20 species. The name comes from the rapidly twitching tail. The tail is used for fighting and threatening other Curly Tails by lashing it around furiously. It's tail is also used to distract predators during an attack. The lizard will frantically twitch its tail to focus the attacker's attention on the tail. When the attack is made the tail is released and the lizard hopefully gets away living to grow a new tail, though never looking the same as the original. Don't handle this animal by the tail or you may be left holding a tail. Curly Tails make great starter lizards. They are relatively calm for lizards of this size. The body is robust with some species being very colorful. Some species may have a small dorsal crest. Curly Tails are diurnal lizards which can be found anywhere from sandy beaches to open forests or rocky deserts. They are ground dwellers, but can be found climbing among rocks and low branches.

ENCLOSURE

A 10 gallon or larger well-ventilated aquarium would be ideal for 2 - 4 lizards. Be sure to include lots of branches to climb on, and rocks to hide among. It is best to have only 1 male to a cage as they are prone to fighting. You can house several females together.

SUBSTRATE

Use sphagnum moss, pine shavings, or Zoo Med REPTI BARK™. You can very easily simulate the earth of the forest or desert floor by mixing sand with peat moss. Do NOT use silica sand, its dust is harmful to you and the animals! Decorate with Zoo Med DESERT TERRARIUM TREES, Zoo Med REPTILE VINES. If you choose to use rocks for decorating, be sure they are firmly positioned to avoid an unnecessary accident.

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Daytime temperatures should range between 80 - 85°F with a basking area of 88°F. Do not let nighttime temperatures drop below 75°F. Keep dry, 30 - 40% humidity.

HEATING

Use a Zoo Med REPTITHERM® UNDER TANK HEATER (U.T.H.) on one end of the tank. Leave it on 24 hours a day. U.T.H.'s will take a few hours to reach their optimal temperature. For easy heat control use a Zoo Med REPTI-TEMP™ RHEOSTAT in conjunction with the U.T.H. Do not unplug the U.T.H. to control temperatures. Reptiles need to be able to regulate their body temperature, so a temperature range must be provided. A basking area, consisting of a Zoo Med REPTI™ BASKING SPOT BULB works well. If your enclosure does not have a glass bottom you can use a Zoo Med REPTICARE® CERAMIC HEAT EMITTER to heat your cage instead of a U.T.H. To automate the heating of your enclosures, connect your Zoo Med REPTICARE® CERAMIC HEAT EMITTER to a Zoo Med REPTI-TEMP™ THERMOSTAT and relax, because the heater will turn on and off depending on where you set the dial. Always use a thermometer and humidity gauge in all reptile & amphibian enclosures. Use at least one thermometer, two is optimal. One on the cooler side, one on the warmer side. A Zoo Med DELUXE ANALOG MIN/MAX THERMOMETER works great to show the high and low temperatures in a 24 hour period.

LIGHTING

All reptiles and amphibians need a photo period (light cycle). A plug in timer (for your white lights only, do not use a timer for your heating devices) works well to develop a regular photo period of 8 - 12 hours of light and 8 - 12 hours of dark. UVB is not necessary, but not harmful. If desired, use a ZOO MED REPTISUN™ fluorescent. Use a Zoo Med REPTICARE® CERAMIC HEAT EMITTER at night and during the day to keep the air temperature up to the recommended levels. Reptiles and amphibians cannot see the red light spectrum, so a low wattage red bulb is ideal for night time viewing of your reptiles.

FOOD & WATER

Curly Tails are robust animals and can handle eating medium to large crickets. They will also eat small amounts of vegetation, small pieces of green leaf lettuce and sweet fruit, or lick fruit flavored baby food from shallow dish. Dust food lightly with REPTIVITE™ every other feeding. Always feed your crickets assorted fruits and vegetables or a commercially prepared cricket diet 12 - 24 hours before feeding the crickets to your pets. Provide a shallow bowl for them to drink from. They should be able to easily get out of the bowl should they fall in.

NOTES

Always wash your hands before and immediately after handling reptiles and amphibians. Never leave live food long term with reptiles & amphibians. They can inflict severe harm, even kill your pet. If your animals take some time to eat or you feed them at night, leave a slice of potato, carrot or dry dog food for the live food items to eat. Your local pet shop is an ideal source for reptile and amphibian related books and supplies. Please make sure you read and become familiar with any instructions provided with reptile support products you may purchase. For further information on reptiles and amphibians we recommend you read *REPTILES MAGAZINE* and *THE VIVARIUM*. California Zoological Supply hopes you have enjoyed reading this reference sheet on assorted Curly Tail Lizards. We hope that our guidelines will assist you with the care or possible purchase of your new pet.

This sheet may be copied in its entirety only.