

CAL ZOO'S REFERENCE SHEET

DAY GECKOS

Latin name	Phelsuma sp	Maximum length	3 - 10 inches depending on species
Native to	Madagascar	Approximate life span	3 - 8 years for smaller species 10 - 15 years for larger species

GENERAL INFORMATION

Day Geckos are the most prominent reptiles in Madagascar and are known for the cross pollination of wild orchids on this island off the southeast coast of Africa. Most species have brilliant fluorescent colors and very active during the day, which is, of course, is where they got their name. Provide them with extra calcium during breeding season. The females will store the extra calcium in their cheeks. These will look like small whitish bumps in their cheeks. The extra calcium is beneficial to the formation of the eggs. Egg clutches consist of 2 eggs. Eggs hatch anywhere between 1 and 4 months when incubated in the mid 70's to mid 80's. Like many other lizards, Day Geckos can release their tail if it is being held. This is a defense mechanism. The tail will come off and continue wiggling, thus keeping the attention of the would-be predator. The Day Gecko is then able to retreat to safety. A new tail will eventually grow in it's place but will usually not appear as nice as the original. Besides having this defense, Day geckos have another defense. If they are being held by their body, they may squirm and tear their skin, allowing a fast escape. It's only the top, colored, part of the skin that tears and they will not bleed. Their skin heals rather quickly, though, so don't panic if it happens to yours. The skin should re-grow with no visible evidence of the tear. This skin tearing is more common in the Giant Day Geckos. So try not to allow them to squirm in your hands if you need to move them. Otherwise they are a look-at animal only. They do not like to be held or touched.

ENCLOSURE

Use a screen enclosure or a high glass aquarium with good ventilation. Decorate the terrarium with live, silk or plastic plants and vines and include lots of climbing branches.

SUBSTRATE

ZOO MED REPTI-BARK™, ZOO MED TERRARIUM MOSS™ or pesticide free mulch and potting soil mixed. Keep slightly damp. Or use ZOO MED CAGE CARPET™

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Daytime temperatures 77 - 84°F. Nighttime temperatures 68 - 75°F. Humidity relatively high 50 - 85%, depending on species. Never let humidity get so high that water condenses on the sides of the enclosure.

HEATING

ZOO MED BASKING LIGHT™ during the day and a red light bulb or ZOO MED CERAMIC HEAT EMITTER™ at night time. Use in conjunction with a ZOO MED RHEOSTAT™ for heat control. Always use a thermometer and humidity gauge in all reptile & amphibian enclosures.

LIGHTING

Use ZOO MED REPTISUN 5.0™ UVB fluorescent bulb during the day (12 hours). It must be placed over screen, not glass (UVB rays cannot penetrate through glass or plastic). Turn all white lights off at night. The UVB fluorescent bulb must be as close as possible to the animals. UVB diminishes greatly the further away the bulb is from the animals.

FOOD & WATER

Small crickets, dusted lightly with REPTIVITE™ vitamins every feeding. Make sure you have fed the crickets an assortment of fruits and vegetables 12 - 24 hours before feeding them to your animals. Another food they eat in the wild is nectar and pollen from orchids or other flowers. A good substitute for this in your terrarium is to offer fruit baby food mixed with a small amount of REPTIVITE™ twice a week or a powdered Lori food given to the Day Geckos in it's dry form. Simply place a small, flat container on the floor of the enclosure with a small amount of the powder or baby food in it. The Day Geckos will lap it up in no time. Provide a shallow water dish and spray the enclosure once a day for 1 - 2 minutes or use a REPTILE-DRIP WATERING SYSTEM.

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 Day Geckos. 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.