

# Crested Gecko Care Guide: An In-Depth Look at Crested Gecko Husbandry

Crested geckos (*Rhacodactylus ciliatus*) are a popular pet reptile due to their vibrant colors, docile nature, and relatively easy care requirements. Understanding proper crested gecko care is crucial to ensure the well-being and longevity of these captivating creatures. This comprehensive guide will delve into every aspect of crested gecko husbandry, providing detailed information to guarantee the health and happiness of your crested gecko companion.

## Habitat Setup



## Crested Gecko Care Guide by Catherine Douglass

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1. **Enclosure:**

Provide a 10-20 gallon terrarium for a single adult crested gecko. The enclosure should have good ventilation and a secure top to prevent escapes.

2. **Substrate:**

Use a moisture-retentive substrate such as eco-earth or a mixture of coconut fiber and sphagnum moss. This helps maintain humidity and provides burrowing areas.

3. **Lighting:**

Provide 12 hours of UVB lighting per day for vitamin D3 synthesis. Use a 5.0 UVB bulb positioned 6-8 inches above the basking area.

4. **Heating:**

Create a temperature gradient in the enclosure. The basking area should be 80-85°F (27-29°C), with the cooler end maintaining around 75°F (24°C). Use a ceramic heat emitter or a heat mat regulated by a thermostat.

5. **Humidity:**

Crested geckos thrive in high humidity. Maintain a daytime humidity level of 70-80% and increase it to 90-100% at night. Use a hygrometer to monitor humidity and mist the enclosure with lukewarm water as needed.

6. **Foliage and Hiding Places:**

Provide plenty of live or artificial plants and hiding places such as cork

bark, caves, and hammocks. These provide shelter, security, and environmental enrichment.

## Diet and Nutrition



- **Primary Diet:**  
Crested geckos are primarily insectivores. Offer a variety of live feeder insects such as crickets, mealworms, dubia roaches, and Phoenix worms.
- **Gut Loading:**  
Gut load live insects with high-nutrient foods like fruits, vegetables, and commercial gut loading diets. This supplements the insects with essential vitamins and minerals.
- **Supplements:**  
Dust feeder insects with a calcium powder (without D3) and vitamin D3

supplement twice a week. This ensures adequate calcium intake for strong bones and health.

- **Water:**

Provide a shallow water dish filled with fresh, dechlorinated water. Mist the enclosure regularly to maintain humidity and encourage the gecko to drink.

- **Frequency:**

Adult crested geckos can be fed 2-3 times per week. Juveniles may require more frequent feedings.

## **Health and Veterinary Care**

1. **Shedding:**

Crested geckos shed their skin regularly. Provide a humid environment and a variety of shedding aids (e.g., moist hide box, damp paper towels) to facilitate the shedding process.

2. **Veterinary Check-Ups:**

Schedule regular veterinary check-ups to ensure the overall health of your crested gecko. An annual fecal exam can detect parasites or other health issues early on.

3. **Common Health Problems:**

Know common health problems in crested geckos such as metabolic bone disease, impaction, and respiratory infections. Seek veterinary attention promptly if you notice any signs of illness.

4. **Signs of Health:**

Observe your crested gecko for signs of good health, including a plump body, bright eyes, and active behavior.

## Handling and Socialization

- **Handling:**

Handle crested geckos gently and support their body fully. Let them come to you to avoid sudden movements that can spook them.

- **Socialization:**

Crested geckos can be kept individually or in pairs. Provide a larger enclosure and multiple hiding areas if housing multiple geckos.

- **Cohabitation:**

Only cohabitate crested geckos of similar size and temperament. Avoid keeping males together as they may compete for territory and resources.

## Lifespan and Breeding



1. **Lifespan:**

With proper care, crested geckos can live for 10-15 years or more.

2. **Breeding:**

Crested geckos reach sexual maturity around 18-24 months of age.

Provide a suitable breeding enclosure, such as a 20-gallon aquarium, and follow specific breeding protocols to ensure the health and well-being of the geckos and offspring.

Providing a suitable habitat, appropriate diet, necessary care, and socialization is essential for the well-being and longevity of crested geckos. Following these guidelines will help you create a thriving environment for

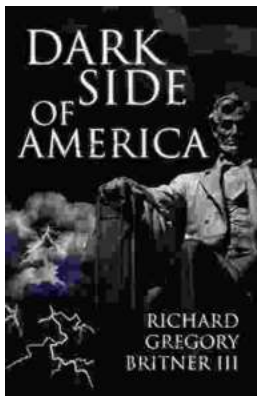
these beautiful and captivating reptiles. Remember to observe your crested gecko regularly, seek veterinary attention when necessary, and enjoy the unique companionship they offer.



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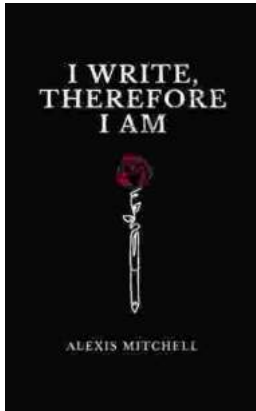
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