

### **Brief Description**

Crested Geckos, (*Correlophus ciliatus*, formerly known as *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*) are small arboreal geckos native to New Caledonia, an island near Australia. Cresties are popular pet lizards, especially for beginners, due to their smaller size (around 8" long) and comparatively easy care requirements. Captive breeding has produced a wide range of color patterns. Unlike other geckos their tail will not grow back if it falls off (don't grab by the tail!), which is a defense mechanism to avoid predators.

### **Lifespan**

With proper care expected lifespan is 15-20 years on average.

### **Sexing**

Once your gecko reaches maturity if you look at the underside of the tail just past the vent males should have two bulges side by side where the hemipenes (reproductive organs) sit in the base of the tail. Females will not have this.

### **Caging**

Baby crested geckos can be kept in 5-10 gallon enclosures as they grow however adults need at least a 20 gallon aquarium. Front opening glass enclosures (minimum size 12x12x18") work particularly well for adult crested geckos as they are arboreal so height is more important than length. Multiple females can sometimes be housed together but males will fight if housed together.

### **Substrate**

Artificial turf like reptile carpet, flat stones or newspaper are best. Coco coir +/- sphagnum moss can also be used but are not necessary. Sand and mulch should be avoided.

### **Lighting and Temperature**

Reptiles are ectotherms (cold-blooded), meaning they need to absorb heat from their environment to regulate their own body heat since they cannot produce it. Crested geckos generally thrive at room temperature (**72-78 degrees**). Temperature should not exceed 87 degrees! A thermometer should be placed in the cage to accurately measure temperature. Lights should be on for 10-12 hours each day and then total darkness at night. Night temperatures can safely drop to 60 degrees so a night time heat source is not necessary.

Crested geckos theoretically do not require UVB light, however recent research suggests that they may benefit from UVB light. UVB lighting is recommended for breeding females especially to prevent metabolic bone disease.

### **Humidity**

Humidity in the tank should be 50-60% at all times with spikes up to 80-90% several times a day when the cage is misted. Humidity should be monitored by a hygrometer.

### **Food**

The staple of the diet should be a commercial powdered Crested Gecko food. Pangea and Repashy both have several varieties of crested gecko diet available. These are made with quality ingredients that provide the balanced nutrition of a complete diet without additional foods or supplements. It should be offered in a small dish every other day and any uneaten portion removed after 24 hours. Crickets (dusted with calcium and gutloaded) can be offered once or twice a week but are not necessary. Mealworms should be avoided.

### **Supplementation**

A powdered calcium supplement (without phosphorus) should be lightly sprinkled over any insects offered. It is not necessary to use on the powdered complete diets.

### **Water**

Geckos will readily drink from droplets on plants, branches, and the glass siding after misting the enclosure. A small dish of clean water should be available at all times.

