



Jungle Bob's Care Sheet Day Geckos (*Phelsuma* sp.)

General Information

The brilliant, neon-hued Day Geckos are hardy, long-lived (to 20+ years) and quite active. Several of the 70+ known species that are commonly bred in captivity make good choices for folks with some lizard-keeping experience under their belts. The following information can be applied to most you'll find in the trade, including Standing's, Gold Dust, Giant, Spotted, Lined and Peacock Day Geckos. However, care details vary a bit, so please to ask us for help if you need more specific information.

Most species are native to Madagascar, but some inhabit the Seychelles, Andaman, Round and Comoros Islands, and Mauritius. Several have been introduced to Hawaii, East Africa and Florida. They favor rainforests and moist woodlands, but several have colonized farms and villages.



Day Geckos range in size from 3-12 inches, and are breathtakingly-colorful. Males have enlarged femoral pores on the underside of their back legs and bulges (indicating the hemipenes) near the cloaca.

Housing

Day Geckos are active, and become stressed in tight quarters. A 20 gallon "high style" aquarium or similar terrarium stocked with branches, plants and vines provides a nice home for 2-3 adults (only 1 male should be kept in each tank) of the smaller species, such as the Yellow-Throated Day Gecko. A 30-55 gallon tank will accommodate a pair or trio of Standing's, Madagascar, or Giant Day Geckos.

Most Day Geckos should be maintained at a daytime temperature of 82-88 F degrees, with a basking spot of 90 F. Night time temperatures should be maintained at 70 -75 F degrees. If your home is cooler than these temperatures at night you will need a [red or other dark-colored heat bulb](#). Ideally, humidity should be maintained from 60-70%. This level of humidity can be established by misting the cage daily with water, or with a [reptile humidifier](#). Be sure to set up plenty of basking sites near heat and UVB bulbs, as dominant individuals may exclude others from these important areas.

Day Geckos require 12-14 hours per day of [UVB light](#), which enables the lizards to produce vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 metabolizes the calcium in the diet. Calcium is needed for proper bone development. Inadequate UVB exposure and calcium intake will result in a crippling and often fatal condition known as Metabolic Bone Disease. Also, it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, as after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure whether your bulb is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test it for you.

Our recommendation for bedding is [cypress mulch, coconut husk, or some other type of mulch](#) that absorbs water and helps maintain a high relative humidity.

Diet

A varied diet is essential for long-term health, and should include small-medium crickets, butter worms, small roaches, silk worms, calci-worms, and other available invertebrates. Insects should themselves be provided with a nutritious gut-loading diet for 1-3 days before being offered to your pets. Crested Gecko diet, to which you can add a bit of ripe papaya, mango and banana, should be provided 3xs weekly. Your geckos will prefer to take nectar from cups suspended above-ground.

Geckos rarely drink from bowls. Rather, a [spray bottle](#) should be used to mist the terrarium twice daily (they will lap up the droplets).

Your pets also need a calcium and vitamin supplement. These supplements work with the UVB light, allowing the lizard to ingest the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. A Calcium/VitaminD3 supplement should be used on all meals offered to babies and reduced to 3-4 times weekly for adults. A vitamin/mineral powder should be employed 2-3 times weekly.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary, with fecal matter and left-over food being removed daily and the substrate being changed once each month. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner; we recommend [Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat](#).

As Day Geckos are high-strung, extremely fast, and prone to drop their tails at the slightest provocation, they are best thought of as pets to observe rather than handle. Always wash your hands before and after handling any animal.

Fun Fact

Day Geckos have the amazing ability to run upside-down on ceilings. Their feet are being studied with a view towards creating new adhesives.

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