



## Chameleons

### Diet and Care Recommendations

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

There are three chameleon species most commonly seen in the pet trade:

**Veiled Chameleon** (*Chamaeleo calytratus*): found in the mountainous regions of Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Temperature range is 68°-87°F, humidity 85-100%.

Identifying characteristics: conical crest along throat, high casque on head, skin green to brown.

Male length 50cm, female length 30cm.

**Panther Chameleon** (*Furcifer pardalis*): found in Madagascar in tropical forests.

Temperature range is 70°-90°F, humidity 50-75%.

Identifying characteristics: skin vibrant blue to red, depending on subspecies.

Male length 50cm, female length 25cm.

**Jackson's Chameleon** (*Chamaeleo jacksonii*): found at high altitude in Kenya, Uganda, and Northern Tanzania.

Temperature range is 60°-80°F, humidity 50-75%.

Identifying characteristics: males have three horns, horns lacking in females, dorsal saw-toothed ridge. Skin color ranges from brown to green or bluish to yellow depending on subspecies.

Male and female length 30cm.

#### DIET

The diet should be made up of crickets gut-loaded with T-Rex Calcium plus or ILF formula.

Silkworms or phoenix worms can be offered as well, and are available for purchase on-line.

#### ENVIRONMENT

Chameleons should be kept in a cage that provides them with plenty of space to move around, climb, and hide.

**Lighting:** Chameleons require a specific wavelength of light called UVB. It is required for the proper absorption of calcium. We recommend using a full-spectrum bulb, the Reptisun 5.0 or 10.0, manufactured by ZooMed. Leave UVB bulbs on for 14 hours a day, and make sure that the bulb is not filtered through glass or plastic. These bulbs need to be changed every 6 months because their effectiveness as a UVB light emitter decreases over time.

**Heat:** Use ceramic heat bulbs. Every enclosure should have a hot and cool end. Keep a thermometer at basking level on the hot end of the enclosure, and at ground level on the cool end. Never use heat rocks or heating pads, as they can cause severe burns. The temperature gradient varies according to species; consult with your veterinarian to determine the proper temperature range for your species of chameleon.

**Substrate:** The humidity level necessary for the proper care of a chameleon varies by species; consult with your veterinarian to determine the proper substrate for your species of chameleon.

**Moisture:** Chameleons live in humid environments, and the level of humidity varies depending on

species. Your veterinarian can advise you of various techniques to make sure your enclosure remains at the proper humidity level for your species of chameleon. All chameleon species must have access to water. Provide a large dish of water for soaking and defecating and change the water daily.

**Furniture:** Chameleons are arboreal, spending almost all of their time in trees. Provide many branches of varying thickness. Fake foliage and “safe” plants can also be added.

### **MEDICAL CARE**

An annual exam performed by a veterinarian is recommended for proper care. Your veterinarian can advise you if any additional testing is required.