

1. Enclosure size:

Adults over 12 grams should be housed in **12"x12"x18" tall enclosure**. A single adult can live in this enclosure for their entire life.

Babies under 12 grams will do fine in a critter container but can be moved up as early as you'd like!

2. Geckos climb and hide:

Leaves, vines, sticks, cork bark Fill your enclosure with plenty of foliage and things for the geckos to climb on and hide behind. They don't often hide inside things, and usually are on display, however giving them things to hide behind makes them feel safe and secure and gives you a more confident gecko that's always out.

Leafy vines at the higher parts of the tank work well! Also things that suction cup to the sides of the tank. Sticks and décor can be store bought or found around the yard. Make sure natural sticks are not rotting, you can bake them in the oven or soak in steamy water to kill off any small organisms you don't want to infest your tank. ***Make sure there are no overly sharp edges.**

3. Food:

A **food and water bowl** is needed. The water bowl is not just for drinking, they like to soak themselves to help them pass bowel movements. Change to clean water regularly. The food dish I recommend is called a **feeding ledge**, it sticks to the side of the cage up high, using suction cups or magnets. In the wild these geckos hunt in the treetops for bugs, and won't always find food placed on the ground of a tall enclosure.

There are two types of food for crested geckos, and I have seen them survive 100% on either option. The first is **crested gecko diet (CGD)** which is powdered fruit and insects which when mixed with water makes a paste for geckos to lick up. The two best brands are **Pangea** and **Repashy**. Repashy is found at large chain stores, and Pangea is at small reptile shops or online.

Live insects is the other food option, some families choose not to feed live bugs and that's ok, your gecko will do fine on CGD. **Crickets** are the most common feeder insects available, other insects include feeder **discoid roaches** (dubia roaches are illegal to breed in Florida but discoid roaches are just as nutrient rich) **mealworms and superworms** can be given **on occasion** both worms are not recommended for different reasons. In the wild these geckos primarily eat locusts and moths as well as ripe fruits, so soft shelled insects are best. ***insects should be about the length of the distance between the geckos eyes**

4. Misting:

Misting is very important, best to do it 2x daily most of the time, morning and evening. Mist the enclosure really well, you want to let it dry out between misting's to avoid mold. You can try to put a hydrometer inside the tank, if you wish to track humidity levels but its not needed in my opinion.

Temperature chart- cut this out and tape to enclosure for easy reminder!

Day temps- **72°-82°F**

Night temps- **67°-72°F**

Checklist

- Tank
- Feeding ledge
- Water bowl
- Mist bottle
- Leafy décor
- Climbing sticks
- CGD or crickets
- Moist hide
- Decoration
- Thermometer
- hydrometer
- LED Lights
- Calcium powder
- Tweezers

bioactive

- Substrate mix
- Sticks
- Cork bark
- Plants
- Isopods
- Springtails
- Leaf litter
- Drainage layer

Geckos drink the dew drops from the misting more than the water bowl, but this **also keeps their skin from getting too dry**. They are tropical animals but are very hardy. If you get busy and forget to mist, they should be just fine. After a good soak and a full feeding you are free to leave for an extended weekend.

5. Moist hide

Many gecko owners choose to add a **moist hide** inside the enclosure, this is a small cave like structure filled with peat moss that holds a higher humidity. This will need to be checked regularly for mold, which is why some owners don't add one at all. If you see mold, replace the moss and clean the container with warm soapy water or vinegar and rinse well. In my experience smooth ceramic rock hides for fish work well, but there are many options online for gecko based products.

OPTIONALS:

6. Light is optional. If you have live plants, **LED grow lights** work well. Any LED fishtank light is good for viewing the contents of the tank during the day.
7. No heat, cage temps should be **70-80 degrees during the day** and can drop to 67 at night. As the tank is glass temps inside will be a few degrees warmer (due to lack of airflow) than temperatures reading outside, especially if the lights give off a little bit of heat. Internal thermometer is only necessary if you keep your house below 70 degrees.

BIOACTIVE:

A bioactive enclosure means a tank with a viable ecosystem that cleans itself. There are 3 things needed to make a tank bioactive. Crested geckos don't seem to mind fake décor, but the real plants stimulate healthy brain activity in humans, so its safe to assume its beneficial for human and gecko.

1. **Proper substrate**- A proper dirt mixture will be mainly for the health of the bugs and plants. The best substrate for a tropical environment is a mix of 40% top soil (no chemicals), 40% coco fiber, and 20% peat moss.
drainage layer for water to escape to so the dirt doesn't mold, drainage layer options: Hydro balls, lava rocks or my personal favorite, matala filter pads. Research which will be best for you!
2. **Live plants**- plants will need to be hardy to survive these climbing velociraptors! Additionally most house and terrarium plants are safe for the geckos as long as they have no spikes or burrs. Pothos and bamboo are both very hardy, but josh's frogs has full lists and videos on what plants are great for each animal terrarium. For best results use plants that thrive on high humidity.
3. **Bugs!**- the most common Clean-up-crew (CUC) duo is Isopods and spring tails. You will never see either of these guys, so I recommend not wasting your money on pretty bugs, and just get the cheapest isopod options. Your gecko may snack on the isopods from time to time, this is safe for the gecko.

Concerning looks or behaviors:

****GECKO SPA**** I mention a gecko spa often as a treatment in the following section. A gecko spa, or simply: spa, is a Tupperware container with air holes, (the one I provide for your gecko to go home in works well) lined with a paper towel and the bottom covered in warm water (for stuck shed) or cool water (for swelling), shallow enough for the gecko to stand. The gecko soaks in this container for 10-15 minutes to help with varying scenarios lined below!

Grey or white, paper skin- Geckos will look grey and papery right before shed, that's usually a good time to keep the overall humidity a little higher! The gecko will eat its own shed, its considered stuck shed if it is not eaten within 24 hours or some remains stuck to the tips of the toes, the armpits or the tip of the tail. If more than that gets stuck often, try misting the enclosure longer or more often. After a soak in the spa a gecko should be able to eat its shed, or in the case of a tiny bit, you can try rubbing it off with a cotton swab or removing gently with tweezers.

Gecko not eating- sometimes before shed, or when moved to a new environment a gecko might go on hunger strike while it acclimates. In the wild their next meal isn't always right away, up to a week or two is perfectly fine without concern. Switching up the food type or feeding live are options you can try. Also putting a tiny drop of wet food (or cricket guts) on their snout will trigger a feeding response when they lick it off to clean their face.

dropped tail (or other open cut)- if your gecko drops its tail, don't panic. This is a reflex reaction in the wild that saves them from prey. They can do it for any random reason, a loud noise, or a sudden change in environment. It doesn't mean you did anything wrong, and we don't believe it hurts the gecko. The tails do not grow back, but you will want to place the gecko in a quarantine tank with paper towel floor to keep the wound clean for a few days. The area will seal up on its own, however topical reptile antiseptic is available at some pet stores for cleaning open wounds and encouraging healing. Small cuts are fine to treat yourself but if a wound is deep, consider seeking veterinarian advice.

Toes stuck together- sometimes these clumsy critters step into the CGD food and it dries up and crusts their toes together. A **gecko spa** will loosen up all that crust and a Q-tip can be used to gently clean the toes. If you don't get it all off that's ok, as long as they can climb around, it will come clean after the next shed!

Gecko lethargic- geckos don't move much during the day. Their normal movement is a slow calculated step that hides their movements from predators. A lethargic gecko will not be able to climb the sides of the glass, will appear skinny (obvious rib cage visibility) and have trouble moving or jumping. You can look up signs of MBD in crested geckos, it is rare with proper husbandry, and usually fixed by dusting crickets with **calcium powder**. Additionally you can dust powder in the wet food, but most CGD has calcium powder inside already. If your baby only eats live food it might be a good idea to dust crickets with powder every feeding.

Random noises- crested geckos are typically very quiet but they can make a variety of sounds, rattles and squeaks almost like frogs. They are likely calling out to find a mate.

Bulge at base of tail- don't be alarmed, gecko babies are very hard to determine gender under 20 grams. Our best guess is not 100%. If your gecko is developing a bulge at the base of its tail, it is probably a male. You can google pictures to compare, and if that's not it, take your baby to a vet.

Male geckos only- a single male living alone probably won't have this issue, but occasionally their hemi-penis will emerge. This usually happens during mating and has no business coming out otherwise but in the off chance it does, the appendage looks alarmingly like their intestines came out the wrong way. No immediate need to panic, he should be able to bring it back in all on his own, however in the case that several hours go by and it's still out, simply give him a gecko spa with **cold** water to reduce swelling and make sure the appendage is clear of debris using a Q tip. If that doesn't work seek advice from a vet.

Female geckos only- you might notice egg laying behaviors, a female will lay 2 eggs every month for 9 months out of the year. She will dig a nest at the bottom to lay them. They should be unfertile however in rare cases a crested gecko can produce fertile eggs without a male. It is called parthenogenesis, where they create genetic clones of themselves. **Female crested geckos can become egg bound if not given a space at the bottom to lay their dud eggs! So substrate will be needed after the females reach 20 grams, or provide a small container with loose dirt inside for her to lay the unfertilized eggs.**