

CRESTED GECKO CARE GUIDE

Correlophus ciliatus

Bay Area Bird & Exotics Hospital

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You are now the keeper of a sticky-toed rainforest noodle with excellent night vision and strong opinions about fruit flavors. Crested geckos are hardy, personable, and delightfully weird — when cared for properly.

HOUSING

- Crested geckos are arboreal — they want vertical space. If it can be climbed, it will be climbed.
- Orientation: vertical enclosure only. Width is nice; height is necessary.

Age	Minimum Enclosure Size
Juvenile	12 × 12 × 18 in
Adult	18 × 18 × 24-30 in (taller is always better)

- Furnishings: branches, cork bark, vines, and multiple hides at different heights — variety reduces stress
- Plants: live or artificial; live plants actively help maintain humidity and double as hides
- Hides: At least one on the warm side and one on the cold side
- Lid: secure, well-ventilated screen or front-opening enclosure — these geckos are escape-motivated

TEMPERATURE

Parameter	Target
Daytime range	72–80°F throughout the enclosure
Maximum (do not exceed)	85°F — overheating is dangerous
Supplemental heating needed?	Only if ambient temps fall below 72°F

- Stable, moderate temperatures are safer than excessive heat — crested geckos tolerate cool conditions far better than overheating

Temperatures above 85°F can severely stress crested geckos and may lead to overheating and death. When in doubt, cooler is safer.

HUMIDITY

- Target humidity: **50–70%**, with **60–70%** being ideal
- Mist lightly **1–2 times daily** — morning and evening works well

- Allow the enclosure to dry slightly between mistings — stagnant damp is not the goal
- Include a **humid hide** and monitor with a **digital hygrometer** — guessing humidity doesn't count
- Proper humidity supports healthy skin, shedding, and hydration — all three matter



LIGHTING

- UVB: low-level UVB recommended — **5.0 Reptisun** or equivalent Arcadia bulb. See our UV Handout for more information.
- Photoperiod: **10–12 hours** of light daily — consistent schedules make for calmer geckos
- Night lighting: none. Crested geckos are nocturnal and prefer actual darkness. Respect that.



SUBSTRATE

- Paper towels: easy to clean, ideal for juveniles, honest about hygiene
- Coconut fiber, soil mixes, or bioactive substrate: better for adults and for humidity retention
- Avoid loose substrates in very young or medically fragile geckos — impaction risk is real



DIET

- Staple diet: **commercial crested gecko diet (Repashy or ZooMed)** powder mixed with water — nutritionally complete and genuinely accepted
- Do not feed baby food, honey or fruit meant for humans. That's not enrichment, that's a sugar problem.

Food Type	Frequency	Notes
CGD (powder + water)	Juveniles: daily / Adults: every 2–3 days	Primary diet — non-negotiable
Insects (crickets, dubia roaches)	1–2 times weekly (optional)	Gut-load and size appropriately before offering



SUPPLEMENTS

- Most complete CGD diets already contain the necessary vitamins and calcium — read the label before adding anything
- If feeding insects, dust lightly with **calcium without phosphorus**. See our Gut Loading handout for information on how best to properly prepare the insects.
- Avoid over-supplementation — more is not better, and imbalances cause their own problems



WATER

- Mist the enclosure so droplets form on leaves and glass — that's how crested geckos drink
- A shallow water dish may be offered, but most geckos prefer licking droplets and will ignore the dish entirely

HANDLING

- Crested geckos are jumpers, not lap pets — always handle low to the ground
- Short, calm sessions only — they tolerate handling, they don't seek it out
- **Never grab by the tail**

Crested geckos can drop their tails as a defense mechanism — and unlike some lizards, they do not grow back. Handle with care and never restrain by the tail.

SHEDDING

- Shedding occurs regularly and is often unnoticed — crested geckos eat their shed skin
- Increased humidity helps prevent retained shed — this is one reason the humid hide matters
- Do not peel shed skin unless directed by a veterinarian. You will make it worse.

CLEANING

- Spot clean daily — remove waste and uneaten food
- Deep clean the enclosure **every 2–4 weeks**
- Disinfect décor regularly with a reptile-safe disinfectant — not whatever is under the sink

VETERINARY CARE

- Annual wellness exams are recommended — even healthy-looking geckos benefit from a baseline
- Fecal testing for parasites at each visit — parasites don't announce themselves
- Husbandry review at every visit — small adjustments prevent big problems

Your gecko may be small, but its health deserves big attention. If something seems off — appetite changes, weight loss, lethargy, unusual appearance — call us. Don't wait.

Questions? We've heard weirder ones. Call us.

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