

## Diet

**Insectivorous** lizards prefer live crickets, mealworms, and waxworms.

**Herbivores** should be provided a mixed salad of calcium rich greens, vegetables and fruits, such as dandelion, romaine, watercress, green beans, bok choy, shredded carrot, papaya, cactus fruit and berries.

The **omnivorous** species need a combination of the above. Larger lizards can be offered pre-killed feeder mice, feeder goldfish, chopped beef heart, or raw egg.

Take time to learn about the different diets for your pet lizard. Observe their eating habits to make sure they are accepting the food.

## Maintenance and Care

Spot clean the enclosure daily and remove droppings. Weekly maintenance should include thoroughly cleaning the branches and rocks, turning the substrate, removing any large clumps, and wiping down the glass.

Lizards should be handled with care and adult supervision. Sudden movements may startle a lizard causing him to run for cover too quickly, resulting in serious injury including the loss of their tail. It is always important to wash your hands with an anti-bacterial soap after handling your lizard.

## Basic Items for Your Lizard

- Housing enclosure at least twice as long as the lizard
- Screen tops and clips
- Basking light
- Full spectrum light
- Thermometer
- Timing device
- Heat sources (ceramic heater, under tank heater)
- Hygrometer to measure humidity
- Appropriate substrate for species
- Non-toxic plants
- Hiding places
- Misting bottle

*This information is designed as a basic guide. There are several books and online resources available which provide in-depth information on specific species and their care.*

## Enjoy Your New Pet!

**Do right by your pet.**

**Do right by our environment.**

**Don't release unwanted pets.**

Visit **Habitattitude™** on [www.pijac.org](http://www.pijac.org)



Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council  
[www.pijac.org](http://www.pijac.org)

# Caring for Your Lizard



Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council  
[www.pijac.org](http://www.pijac.org)

## About Lizards

Lizards are popular pets. They require little space and are easy to maintain.

The natural habitat of lizards ranges from the rain forests and jungles of the tropics to the parched and arid areas of the world. Many factors influence your lizard's health and well-being such as light, heat, humidity, stress, nutrition, and hydration. Therefore, it is very important to understand where and how lizards exist naturally in the wild. Be sure to check with your pet retailer for your lizard's specific environmental requirements. You should also ask for recommendations on good books, reference materials, and online resources about the species.

## Housing

The best home for most lizards is an aquarium, designed into a terrarium. The larger the aquarium, the better it will be for your lizard. Reptiles are escape artists, and are faster and stronger than most people realize. Therefore, it is essential that you provide a secure screen cover that has hinges, a latch, or locking device that secures all four sides. Placing weights on top of a screen cover is not sufficient.

Some lizards require special housing because of their potential size, such as Green Iguanas, Tegus, Monitors, and larger Chameleons. There are specific enclosures for these reptiles that are ideal.

## Environment

The base of the aquarium should be covered with a material called "substrate." The proper substrate varies depending on the species. Common substrates include:

**Sand:** ground-dwelling desert lizards  
**Coarse bark and/or peat moss based potting soil:** woodland lizards  
**Sphagnum moss over bark chips, provided they are incapable of being digested:** Arboreal lizards

In addition, you may add materials for hiding, basking, temperature-regulation, and climbing such as cork bark, logs, grapevine branches, driftwood, decorative rocks, and artificial plants. This, too, depends on your selected species.

Do not include potentially toxic materials such as cedar wood/shavings, stained wood, metal, or paint. Be aware that a lizard's nails, tails, and teeth can get caught on wire or other materials with small crevices. As you need to periodically sanitize the substrate, make sure that your substrate material is easily removable for cleaning.

## Temperature

It is best to have varying temperatures throughout the enclosure, including areas where your lizard can bask. Provide heat with the addition of a special incandescent reptile fixture and an ultra-violet bulb (UVB). UVB light is required for most diurnal lizards for vitamin D synthesis. Purchase a timer to establish day/night

cycles, and turn the basking lights off at night. Lizards need warmth 24-hours a day, so use thermometers, electric basking rocks, and under aquarium heat pads for this purpose.

Desert lizards require a dry heat between 85-100 degrees Fahrenheit. If the room temperature is kept below 70 Fahrenheit, it may be necessary to use an under tank heater to maintain proper temperatures.

Woodland lizards require dry warmth between 70-80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Rainforest lizards require a warm and humid environment between 75-90 degrees Fahrenheit, as well as a daytime basking area.

## Water

While both desert and tropical lizards require fresh water every day, the way it is provided depends on the species. Options include:

- A heavy, shallow water dish
- Misting the environment, allowing droplets to be lapped up from leaves, branches, etc.
- Special reptile drip system

Check with your retailer about the water requirements for your specific lizard.