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CAECILIANS

Mexican Caecilian

Dermophis mexicanus

Dermophis mexicanus is a large, limbless, burrowing caecilian from Mexico and Central America. It looks like a big earthworm, lives in moist, loose soil and gives birth to live young after a gestation of 11 months. Little is known about keeping the species.

Family: Dermophiidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-60 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Dry forest, rainforest and montane forest**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 40 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-23 °C**
Humidity	**90-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Development	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Litter size	**3-16 young**
Gestation	**335 days**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about keeping *Dermophis mexicanus*, but the species is one of the terrestrial caecilians most often found in the trade.
TEMPERATURE	Keep 22-25 °C by day and 21-23 °C at night. The temperature must be stable and vary by no more than about 3 °C; rapid and large fluctuations are poorly tolerated.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	The substrate must be evenly moist, but not so wet that water can be squeezed out of a handful, and there must never be standing water at the bottom of the box. The air in the box is practically saturated (90-100 %).
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	There should be no water bowl. The animal gets water from the moist substrate and from condensation on the walls of the box, and a water bowl easily makes the substrate too wet. The water is used only to moisten the substrate.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species lives underground and does not need UVB or any special lighting. An ordinary day-night rhythm in the room with 10-14 hours of light is enough. The box should not stand in direct sunlight.
FEEDING	Earthworms are the staple food and are taken by almost all terrestrial caecilians. Use small to medium earthworms, such as compost worms, and cut them into pieces for juveniles. Put 10-15 worms in the box every other week.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Dermophis mexicanus* lives hidden and spends almost all of its time buried.
NATIVE RANGE	Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.