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CHAMELEONS

Spiny Chameleon

Furcifer verrucosus

Furcifer verrucosus is one of Madagascar's largest chameleons and lives in the hot, dry spiny forests of the south and south-west. The male reaches up to 57 cm and has a tall casque and a crest of spines along the back, while the female is far smaller and brownish. The species is shy, drinks a lot and requires strong heat, UVB and a cool period in winter.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo verrucosus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**21-57 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**2-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**31-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-22 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**15-25 °C** 8 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**6-10 months**
Clutch size	**30-50 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**270-365 days** at 20-23 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The male needs a mesh enclosure of at least 60 × 60 × 120 cm (length × width × height), the female at least 60 × 60 × 90 cm. Height is the most important, and larger is better.
TEMPERATURE	The heat requirements are similar to those of *Chamaeleo calyptratus*. By day it should be 25-30 °C with a basking spot of 31-35 °C, and at night the temperature should fall by 5-8 °C, to 17-22 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The enclosure should be kept relatively dry, about 40-60 % humidity, and dry out between mistings. Even so, the species has the same need for water as other chameleons, and the habitat is dry but often humid in the air.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and basks in open, sunny areas. Give about 12 hours of light with a T5 HO tube or a powerful LED lamp over the whole length of the enclosure. Natural sunlight without glass is good for the species.
FEEDING	*Furcifer verrucosus* is an insectivore and eats large quantities. Offer crickets, grasshoppers, flies, moths, mealworms and superworms. Adults prefer large prey. The young grow quickly and eat large quantities.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is shy and easily stressed by onlookers. It is not handled, and a new animal needs several weeks of peace.
NATIVE RANGE	Madagascar.