herpy

GECKOS

Variable fat-tailed gecko

Diplodactylus conspicillatus

Diplodactylus conspicillatus is a small, sturdily built desert gecko from inland Australia with a broad, flat tail and a distinct dark stripe from the snout to the eye. It is nocturnal, hides in holes in the ground during the day and in the wild feeds almost exclusively on termites, which makes feeding a challenge.

Family: Diplodactylidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**6-7 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-8 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 30 × 25 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Basking spot	**28-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**12-18 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**59-65 days** at 27-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

The care of *Diplodactylus conspicillatus* is similar to that of the other ground-dwelling species in the genus, for example *Diplodactylus galeatus* and *Diplodactylus vittatus*; only the food is different.

TEMPERATURE

The terrarium must have a warm side and a cool side. A heat mat or heat tape under one end, controlled by a thermostat, should give 28-30 °C on part of the floor. The rest is kept at 22-26 °C during the day.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Diplodactylus conspicillatus comes from dry regions and does not need high humidity. Ordinary room air at 30-50 % is enough. A shallow dish of fresh water at the cool end is fine.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Diplodactylus conspicillatus is nocturnal and needs no UVB or other special lighting, so UVB is optional. Let the daylight in the room set the daily rhythm, or use a timer of 10-12 hours in summer and shorter days in winter.

FEEDING

Diplodactylus conspicillatus is a termite specialist, and that makes the food the biggest challenge. Live termites are the best food and are eaten greedily.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Diplodactylus conspicillatus is quiet and withdrawn. During the day it sleeps in its hide and becomes active when the lights go out. Handling is unnecessary and should be rare and brief.

NATIVE RANGE

Australia.