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GECKOS

Gargoyle gecko

Rhacodactylus auriculatus

A sturdy, calm climber from the scrub of New Caledonia, with bumps on the back of the head like a little Gothic gargoyle and a tail that can grip the branches. It tolerates room temperature, lives on prepared diet and insects, and is a good choice for anyone who wants a robust gecko with a bit more weight and personality.

Family: Diplodactylidae Former name: *Platydactylus auriculatus; Ceratolophus hexaceros*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**18-23 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**35-70 g**
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-27 °C**
Basking spot	**26-28 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects, fruit and complete diet**
Kept	**Singly or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**15-24 months**
Clutch size	**2 eggs**
Incubation	**60-90 days** at 22-27 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs an enclosure of at least 45 × 45 × 60 cm (length × width × height). 60 × 60 × 60 cm is a good size, and because *Rhacodactylus auriculatus* comes down to the ground more often than *Correlophus ciliatus*, extra floor area is worth more than extra height.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the enclosure should be 22-27 °C, and a small area at the top may reach 26-28 °C. At night the temperature should fall to 18-22 °C, and in winter the animal tolerates nights down to 16-18 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should fluctuate between about 50 and 80%. Mist the enclosure in the evening so that the humidity rises to 70-80%, and let it fall to around 50-60% during the day so the substrate can dry out.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is active at dusk and at night and can manage without UVB when the diet contains vitamin D3.

FEEDING

The staple diet is a prepared powdered diet for fruit-eating geckos, mixed with water into a thick paste. Brands such as Repashy and Pangea are developed for this group of geckos and contain fruit, protein, calcium and vitamins.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Rhacodactylus auriculatus is calm and can become quite tame, and most animals tolerate being handled well. Keep sessions short, 5-10 minutes a couple of times a week, and give new animals a couple of weeks in peace to settle in.

NATIVE RANGE

New Caledonia.