herpy

GECKOS

Big-scaled dwarf gecko

Sphaerodactylus macrolepis

One of the smallest geckos in the world: a diurnal dwarf gecko from the leaf litter on the islands east of Puerto Rico. Adults measure only 17-28 mm from snout to vent and tolerate neither drought nor heat. *Sphaerodactylus macrolepis* needs an enclosure with a deep, moist leaf-litter substrate and a steady supply of live micro-feeders, and it is therefore a species for the experienced keeper.

Family: Sphaerodactylidae Former name: *Sphaerodactylus imbricatus; Sphaerodactylus danforthi*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**17-28 mm** snout-vent length
Weight	**0.3 g**
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Dry forest and rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**30 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**24-27 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1 eggs**
Incubation	**80-90 days** at 26-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

A pair needs an enclosure of at least 30 × 30 × 30 cm (length × width × height). Only one pair may be kept in each enclosure, because both males and females are aggressive towards other adults.

TEMPERATURE

Sphaerodactylus macrolepis prefers about 25 °C. Keep 24-27 °C by day and 21-24 °C by night, so the temperature falls slightly at night as in the wild.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should be 60-80 %, and down in the leaf litter the substrate must be moist all the time, so that there is a place in the enclosure where the humidity approaches 100 %, like under the leaves in the wild.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is regarded as diurnal but stays in shade and in the leaf litter and is seen mostly early and late in the day.

FEEDING

In the wild the gecko lives mostly on small arthropods such as springtails, and it also takes fruit flies, both larvae and adults. This fits its size: the feeder animal must be smaller than the animal's head.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The gecko is fast, shy and very small, and it must not be handled. It can escape through even small openings, and even a light touch can injure it. Keep the enclosure closed and sealed, and work calmly with the substrate.

NATIVE RANGE

Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands and Anguilla.