herpy

IGUANAS

Desert Iguana

Dipsosaurus dorsalis

Dipsosaurus dorsalis is a pale, fast and unusually heat-tolerant iguana from the deserts of the south-western USA and north-western Mexico. It grows to 33-45 cm, burrows in sand and feeds almost exclusively on flowers, leaves and buds. It needs a dry enclosure with a deep sand floor, very high heat and strong UVB, and it can live 8-15 years.

Family: Iguanidae Former name: *Crotaphytus dorsalis; Dipsosaurus carmenensis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**33-45 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**28-38 °C**
Basking spot	**42-46 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-24 °C**
Humidity	**15-30%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 4
Diet	**Plants**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**31-33 months**
Clutch size	**3-8 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**60-75 days** at 30-35 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	One animal or a pair needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height). Three or four adults need at least 120 × 120 cm of floor space and preferably 180 × 90 cm.
TEMPERATURE	The air should be 28-38 °C during the day with a clear gradient, and the warm half should be 33-41 °C, which the species prefers. The basking spot should be 42-46 °C measured on the surface with an infrared thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be low: 15-30 %, briefly higher just after a light misting of the sand. Mist the substrate only a little, when the sand is so dry that the tunnels collapse.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	Put a small, stable water bowl in the cool end. The species seldom drinks from the bowl and gets most of its fluid from damp greens, but the bowl should be available at all times.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Dipsosaurus dorsalis* is diurnal and belongs to Ferguson zone 4.
FEEDING	*Dipsosaurus dorsalis* is herbivorous, and the diet must be plant-based.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Dipsosaurus dorsalis* is calm and can become nearly tame if handled gently from a young age. Lift it from underneath, and do not close your hand around it.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Mexico.