herpy

IGUANAS

Texas horned lizard

Phrynosoma cornutum

Phrynosoma cornutum is a broad, flattened lizard with horns on its head and two rows of pointed scales along its sides. It lives in open, dry grassland and scrub in the southern USA and northern Mexico. It reaches 7-13 cm from snout to vent, is diurnal and feeds mostly on ants. It is precisely the food that is the great obstacle: it is hard to replace, and the species is one of the most difficult lizards to keep in a terrarium.

Family: Phrynosomatidae Former name: *Agama cornuta; Phrynosoma brevicornis; Phrynosoma bufonium; Phrynosoma harlanii; Phrynosoma planiceps*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**7-13 cm** snout-vent length
Weight	**25-90 g**
Lifespan	**7-9 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 50 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-29 °C**
Basking spot	**38-42 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24 months**
Clutch size	**14-37 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**40-61 days** at 27-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Phrynosoma cornutum*. Care is therefore based on its habitat: open, dry terrain, loose soil, strong sun and a diet of ants.
TEMPERATURE	The species loves the sun and needs a basking spot where the surface reaches 38-42 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Air humidity should be low, 20-40 %, and the enclosure should dry out completely during the day. The substrate must not be wet.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and spends the day in open sunlight, so it needs strong light and UVB all year round. Use a UVB tube (Ferguson zone 3, T5 HO 10-14 %) or a combined UVB metal halide lamp over the basking spot.
FEEDING	Food is the decisive limitation. In the wild about 70 % of the diet is harvester ants (*Pogonomyrmex*), and the young eat only small ants. The rest is termites, beetles and grasshoppers.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Phrynosoma cornutum* is calm and quiet and lives alone. It does not make much fuss and is easy to overlook, because it blends into the ground. It moves in short bursts, raises its upper body and looks around.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Mexico.