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IGUANAS

Desert Spiny Lizard

Sceloporus magister

Sceloporus magister is a robust, spiny lizard from the deserts of the south-western USA and north-western Mexico. It is diurnal, climbs in trees, bushes and on rocks, and feeds on insects. The male has blue patches on the throat and belly. It needs a large, dry enclosure with strong UVB, a very hot basking spot and a cool brumation. The female lays eggs.

Family: Phrynosomatidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal, rock-dwelling and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 50 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-32 °C**
Basking spot	**38-42 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-22 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**9-12 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**12-24 months**
Clutch size	**4-24 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**60-80 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	Little specific knowledge exists about the care of *Sceloporus magister*, and it is based on the desert climate and on knowledge of the genus.
TEMPERATURE	The air should be 27-32 °C by day. The basking spot should have 38-42 °C on the surface, measured with an infrared thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be low, about 20-40 %. The enclosure must be dry and well ventilated. Provide a shallow dish of fresh water, and change the water daily.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Sceloporus magister* is diurnal and basks, so it needs strong UVB. Use a T5 HO tube (Ferguson zone 3) in a reflector over the basking spot.
FEEDING	The species is insectivorous. Give varied live insects: crickets, cockroaches, grasshoppers, mealworms, Zophobas, silkworms and waxworms. The feeder insects must not be larger than the animal's head.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The animal is alert, fast and territorial, and handling stresses it. Keep handling to a minimum, and never grab the tail, because it can break off.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Mexico.