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IGUANAS

Emerald Swift

Sceloporus malachiticus

Sceloporus malachiticus is a small, agile lizard from the cool mountain forests of Central America. The male is emerald green with blue belly patches, the female brown with dark spots. The species is diurnal, feeds on insects and both climbs and runs on the ground. It needs a well-lit enclosure with UVB, a warm basking spot, humid air and cooler nights. It gives birth to live young and is difficult to settle in.

Family: Phrynosomatidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-25 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal, rock-dwelling and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Montane forest and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**90 × 45 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Basking spot	**33-37 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**12-18 months**
Litter size	**2-10 young**
Gestation	**90-120 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Little is known about the care of *Sceloporus malachiticus*, and what is known is based largely on the climate of the mountain forests. An adult needs an enclosure of at least 90 × 45 × 60 cm (length × width × height).

TEMPERATURE

Sceloporus malachiticus comes from cooler altitudes and should not be given the high temperatures that the desert species of the genus get. The air should be 24-29 °C during the day.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be 60-80 %. Mist plants and furnishings morning and evening so that there are droplets to drink, and keep the substrate damp but not wet.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Sceloporus malachiticus is diurnal and basks in the middle of the day, so it needs UVB. Use a T5 HO tube (Ferguson zone 3) in a reflector over the basking spot.

FEEDING

The species is an insectivore but also eats a little foliage. Give live insects: crickets, cockroaches, small grasshoppers, mealworms, silkworms and black soldier fly larvae, no larger than the animal's head.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The animal is shy and agile and tolerates handling poorly, so handling is kept to a minimum. Never take hold of the tail, because it can break off. Males are territorial and must not be housed together.

NATIVE RANGE

Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.