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IGUANAS

Western fence lizard

Sceloporus occidentalis

Sceloporus occidentalis is a small, fast, rough-scaled lizard from the western USA that sits on rocks, trunks and fences in full sun. The male has blue patches on the belly and throat, which he shows off with push-ups. The species reaches about 21 cm, is diurnal and feeds on insects. It needs a strong basking spot, UVB, a spacious enclosure and a tight-fitting lid.

Family: Phrynosomatidae Former name: *Sceloporus longipes; Sceloporus smaragdinus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**14-23 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**4-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal, rock-dwelling and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rocky terrain and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-28 °C**
Basking spot	**38-42 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-24 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**8-12 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**12-24 months**
Clutch size	**3-17 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**55-65 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 is known about the care of *Sceloporus occidentalis* specifically, so care is based on the requirements that the small, sun-loving species in the genus share.

TEMPERATURE
By day the temperature should be 27-28 °C. Directly under a heat lamp there should be a basking spot of 38-42 °C, measured on the surface with an infrared thermometer.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
Air humidity should be moderate, about 30-50 %. The species lives in open, sunlit areas and does not tolerate persistent steamy humidity, but the substrate must not be bone dry either.

LIGHTING AND UVB
Sceloporus occidentalis is diurnal and sun-loving and needs strong light and UVB all year round. Use a UVB tube (Ferguson zone 3) or a combined UVB metal halide lamp over the basking spot.

FEEDING
Sceloporus occidentalis is an insectivore. In the wild it eats crickets, spiders, ticks, scorpions, ants and beetles and now and then takes a smaller lizard.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Sceloporus occidentalis is wary, fast and territorial. The males display with push-ups, head bobs and an inflated body. The species does not become tame and is not suited to handling.

NATIVE RANGE
United States and Mexico.