



Emerald Tree Skinks

Lamprolepis smaragdina

INTERMEDIATE · 8.5-10 IN ADULT · DIURNAL · ARBOREAL

Smooth green scales, a watchful eye and a quick dash between branches: emerald tree skinks bring activity to a planted terrarium. These tree-dwelling lizards range across Southeast Asia and Pacific islands. Some become confident around their keeper, but they remain fast, agile animals that need room, cover and a reliable daily routine. [2,3]

AT A GLANCE	
Basking perch	95 °F / 35 °C
Cool zone	75-85 °F / 24-29 °C
Night	68-77 °F / 20-25 °C
Day humidity	Around 70%; higher at night
UVB	UVI 2-3; access to shade
Diet	Varied insects; occasional fruit
Feeding	Young daily; adults 3x/week
Adult length	8.5-10 in, including tail
Adult enclosure	24 x 18 x 36 in minimum



A fruit-based food can add variety; insects remain the main part of this skink's diet. [2,3]

Photo: Habitat-OS (AI-upscaled)

01

Curious, Quick and Best Left in Control

Let a settled skink approach you instead of chasing it around the enclosure. If it chooses to climb onto a hand, support its body and stay close to a safe surface: these lizards jump. **Never lift or restrain one by its tail**; it can shed the tail when threatened. Secure doors and service openings before working inside. [2,3,6]

02

Housing: Give the Canopy Some Space

Use a tall, ventilated, front-opening enclosure with climbing routes and leafy retreats. The table gives a published minimum for one adult and a roomier option. For youngsters, make food and water easy to locate. Groups need more space and several feeding, basking and hiding sites; monitor each animal and separate persistent aggression. [1,4]

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Adult	24x18x36	36x24x36	One skink; provide usable climbing space. [1]
Group	Not fixed	Larger	Multiple resource sites; watch each animal. [1,4]

L x W x H, inches. [1] gives the single-adult minimum; the larger size is a practical option, not a group standard.

03

Heat, Light & UVB

Set a basking perch near 95 °F, with a shaded 75-85 °F zone and a 68-77 °F night drop. Measure at the perch and in the cool zone, not just against the glass. Provide linear UVB with a measured **UV Index of 2-3 at basking height**, plus shaded retreats. Lamp strength, reflector, mesh and distance all affect exposure; follow the lamp's safe mounting instructions and verify with a UV meter. Add bright visible light and a timer for roughly 11-13 hours of daylight, with darkness overnight. [1,2,4]

04

Humidity & Drinking Water

Aim for daytime humidity near 70%, rising overnight. Mist foliage around morning and evening so droplets are available to drink, then allow surfaces to dry between sessions. Keep air moving through the enclosure and measure humidity with a digital hygrometer. A clean, shallow water dish should also remain available. Adjust misting to the readings rather than keeping everything constantly wet. [2,6]

05

Branches, Cover & a Clean Floor

Connect sturdy branches at different heights and angles; add cork tubes and dense, nontoxic foliage. The skink should be able to travel, bask and hide above the floor. A moisture-holding substrate such as coco fiber helps buffer humidity. Remove waste and spoiled food promptly. Bioactive planting can help, but it still needs inspection and routine cleaning. [1,2]

06

Feeding an Insect Hunter

Rotate suitably sized crickets, roaches and other feeder insects. Offer food daily to growing skinks and about three times weekly to adults, adjusting portions to body condition. Small servings of soft fruit or a fruit-based gecko diet add variety; they should not replace the insect base. Gut-load feeders before use and provide calcium and vitamins. Choose one reptile supplement regimen suited to the UVB setup, follow its label, and avoid overlapping D3 products. Remove uneaten food. [2,4,6]

07

Health Red Flags

Watch for declining appetite, weight loss, unusual inactivity, difficulty climbing, muscle twitching or swelling of the jaw and limbs. These signs need a reptile veterinarian; they do not establish a diagnosis by themselves. Review temperatures, measured UVB, supplements and access to food, especially if several skinks share the enclosure. Record changes so the vet has a useful history. [4,5]

Sources (click): [1] ReptiFiles; [2] Leap Habitats; [3] Marwell Zoo; [4] Merck Nutrition; [5] Merck Health; [6] Keeper notes. Prepared for NARBC, September 2026. This text uses the linked references, not an existing Habitat-OS species record.