



Leachianus Geckos

Rhacodactylus leachianus

INTERMEDIATE • 8–17 IN ADULT • 20–30 YR LIFESPAN • NOCTURNAL • NEW CALEDONIA

The largest gecko on earth, and it acts like it. Leachies come from the humid forests of New Caledonia, where they live vertically in tree hollows, and a grown one is a heavy, mottled animal that growls at whatever annoys it. They live twenty to thirty years. Honest headline: this is a display animal that tolerates handling at best, and it will never share a cage.

AT A GLANCE	
Difficulty	Intermediate
Ambient temp	72–78 °F
Basking spot	80–84 °F
Humidity	60–80%
UVB	Low UVB recommended
Diet	CGD, insects, occasional fruit
Feeding	CGD every 2 days, insects 2x/wk
Adult size	8–17 in (largest gecko)
Lifespan	20–30 years



Captive-bred leachianus geckos, the largest gecko species alive, turn up on breeder tables at NARBC shows.

Photo: Lennart Hudel / iNaturalist · CC BY

01

Big, Vocal and Not a Lap Pet

Leachies are an intermediate keeper's gecko, not because their care is fussy but because they are big, strong and opinionated. Most are calm once settled, and most will also bark, growl or gape when they have had enough. Some individuals nip, and a bite from the largest gecko in the world is not nothing. Handle briefly, low over a soft surface, and let the animal set the pace. Watching beats holding.

02

Housing by Life Stage

Leachies climb, so height beats floor space at every age. A hatchling starts at 8×8×12 and an adult needs 24×24×36 as a floor, with 36×24×48 the size you should actually buy. Racks are wrong for this species at every stage. **One gecko per enclosure, for life.** This species turns on cage mates it has tolerated for years, and a bad pairing ends in torn skin, lost toes or a dead gecko, sometimes overnight.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	8×8×12	12×12×18	High-value hatchlings: house individually from day one, never together.
Juvenile	12×12×18	18×18×24	Slow grower: takes 3–4 years to reach adult size.
Subadult	18×18×24	24×24×36	Heavy-bodied, so it needs substantial climbing branches.
Adult	24×24×36	36×24×48	Up to 14+ in, 300+ g. A hollow log or large cork tube is non-negotiable.

Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Every stage prioritizes vertical space, and no stage suits a rack.

03

Heat, Night Drop and Light

Hold the ambient range at 72–78 °F with a warm spot of 80–84 °F, heated from above and run through a thermostat. Never a heat rock. Contact heat is how reptiles end up with deep belly burns. Let the room fall to 68–72 °F at night; that drop is part of the care, not a failure of it. Low UVB is recommended even for a night animal, mounted so the gecko can choose shade or sit under it when it wants.

04

Humidity & Water

Target 60–80% humidity, and get there by cycling rather than fogging around the clock. A heavy evening misting, then a drying period before the next one, mimics what a New Caledonian forest actually does. Cross-ventilation matters as much as the mister; stagnant, permanently wet air is how respiratory trouble starts. Keep a shallow water dish topped up regardless. Many leachies drink standing water as readily as they lick droplets.

05

Substrate, Cover and Furniture

A hollow log or a wide cork tube is the one piece of furniture a leachie cannot do without, since it is where the animal sleeps out the day. Branches have to hold a 300 gram gecko without flexing, so think cork rounds and thick hardwood, not dowels. Bioactive suits this species well: deep organic substrate holds humidity, a cleanup crew handles waste, and live plants give a shy adult the cover it needs.

06

Feeding a Giant

Leachies are omnivores. Prepared crested gecko diet (CGD) is the staple, offered fresh every two days, with insects twice a week and an occasional piece of soft fruit. Dust those insects with plain calcium, no D3 and no phosphorus, at both feedings, plus a multivitamin twice a month. One D3 source only: with no lamp, a D3 calcium replaces the plain powder once a week and the multivitamin comes off. Growth is slow, so resist pushing food into a young gecko. Weigh monthly and write it down.

07

Health Red Flags

Stuck shed is the everyday one, and it is worse than it looks: rings of retained skin on toes cut off circulation and cost the gecko digits. Check the feet after every shed. Then watch for steady weight loss, a gecko sitting out in the open all day, drooling or a cheesy film in the mouth, and open-mouth breathing in a cage that never dries. Any of those is a reptile vet now, not next month.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual - when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.