

Velvet Geckoes



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FAST FACTS

Common Names

Marbled Velvet Gecko
Northern Velvet Gecko

Scientific Names

Oedura marmorata
Oedura castelnaui

Colour

Depending on species, base colours can range from tan to black overlaid with gold, brown, white and yellow markings in bands and speckles

Max. Size

to 15cm, usually 10-12cm

Temperament

These are shy animals that will learn to trust their owners

Ease of Care

Properly housed, these geckoes are great captive animals. They do require attention every 1-2 days.

Natural History

Velvet Geckoes are small lizards that range across most of Australia except the arid deserts. Found under fallen bark and leaves, under bark on trees, in crevices and small caves caved from stone, within rock jumbles and also traversing open plains during the night, they have learnt to exploit many environments. Having a type of suction on their toes allows them to climb vertical and the underside of horizontal surfaces with ease, chasing down insect meals wherever they may be.

Captive Husbandry

CAGING: Velvet geckoes, although quite small, will appreciate some room in their cage. Cages measuring 450 x 300 x 300 (mm) are great for housing 2-3 adult animals. Care must be given to providing lots of hides and retreats for them, with a good rule of thumb being 1 animal = 3 hides. Timber, plastic or glass cages are all suitable for this species, provided holes and gaps are very small to avoid escapees.

HEAT: Velvet geckoes are ectotherms (cold blooded), and so they need a source of heat. This heat can be effectively provided in the form of a small heatpad under 50% of the floor of the cage, allowing them to warm themselves to their desired body temperature. This heatpad should be connected to a thermostat to prevent overheating

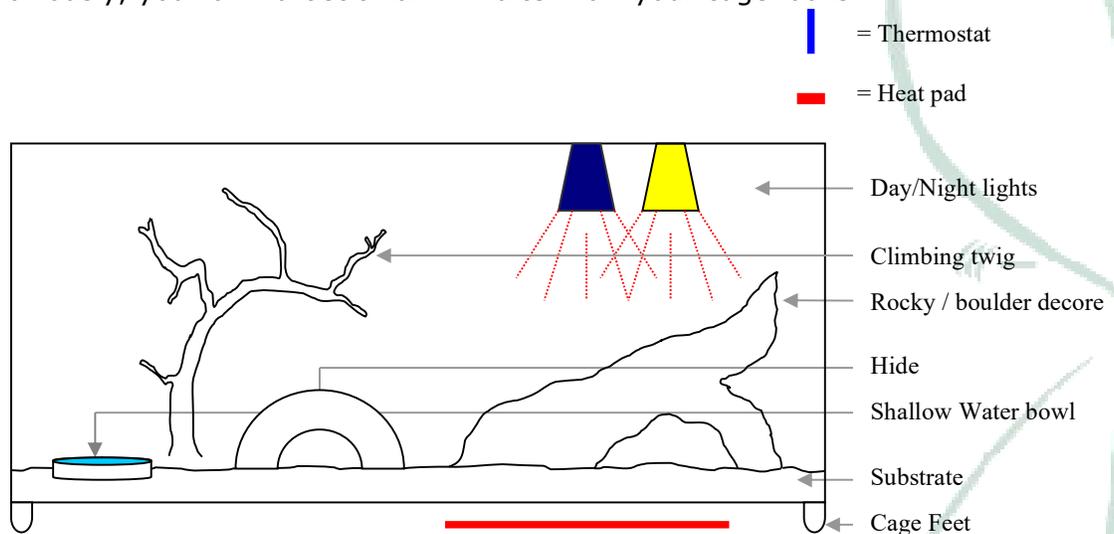
Velvet Geckoes will function best when their body temperature is 29-30°C and so will need temperatures around 31-32°C at the warm end and around 27°C at the cool end of the cage. Setting your thermostat at 30°C and locating your heat sources and thermostat probe as shown in Cage diagrams 1 & 2 will help you achieve this.

LIGHTING: These lizards are nocturnal in nature (night time animals), and so will be active when the lights are out. It is very important to have a day/night cycle in their cage of 14 hrs of day, 10 of night, delivered by white lighting. You can illuminate their cage at night using red or dark blue globes if you wish. Locating your cage away from natural sun is a good idea.

HABITAT: Velvet Geckoes will use almost anything as habitat. It is very important though, that plenty of hides and retreats are available to them. A varied selection of caves, rocks, logs, stumps, bark, bones, plastic plants and similar items will all be beneficial to them. Clean flooring is important, with sands, wood shavings, barks or paper cat litters providing a clean and effective litter. All floorings should be completely changed every 4 weeks, with spot cleaning occurring weekly. If you are using sand, sifting it with flyscreen is an effective way of spot cleaning. All furnishings should be thoroughly scrubbed every 4 weeks, with a “change of scenery” provided at this time to keep your gecko enthusiastic for new smells and new territories. Cleaning of walls, floor and furnishings should be done with a “reptile safe” cage cleaner. Don’t use household chemicals.

Geckoes are susceptible to aerosols, so we strongly encourage you to avoid using aerosols in or around their cage.

SETTING UP A CAGE: Below is a diagram of how a cage should be set up. Obviously, your own artistic flair will alter how your cage looks



Biological Cycles

FEEDING: In captivity, Velvet Geckoes will feed on insects (especially crickets and woodroaches). They can also be fed garden insects if you know they have not been sprayed with chemicals. When feeding insects, we recommend you follow this routine

- 1) Check that your gecko is warm and happy (and so is enthusiastic to feed)
- 2) Place your tub of crickets in the fridge for 5-10 minutes to “slow them down”
- 3) Open the cricket tub and select the required amount of food and place in another container. Be sure to only select crickets smaller in length than the distance between the eyes of your gecko. We suggest you use something like a large glass jar to place the crickets in to. One gecko should eat 2-3 crickets in a sitting
- 4) Sprinkle a small amount of calcium dust into the jar and give it a swirl until all the crickets are coated in calcium
- 5) Release the crickets into the gecko’s cage for natural foraging by the gecko, or alternatively, you can attempt to feed crickets direct to the gecko via feeding tweezers.
- 6) After feeding, return any uneaten live crickets to their container, rinse and dry your jar ready for next time.

We recommend when purchasing insects that you check with your retailer as to when the crickets arrived. Freshly arrived, freshly packed crickets will be a far better feed for your gecko than older stock. As you will be needing fresh crickets regularly, why not place a standing order with your retailer, that way you know they are freshly put aside for you each week.

A bowl of water is also important to have in the cage, but be sure to use very shallow dishes to avoid drowning. They will also appreciate a light misting of water 2-3 times per week – just enough for the water to bead on the gecko and the walls of the cage. Geckoes will like their faces, drinking the water off themselves.

DEFECATION: Velvet Geckoes will eat every 2 days, and generally speaking, defecate every 2-4 days. Their excrement will consist of a white chalky component (the urine) and a dark stool that will contain insect shells. These should be removed from the cage every few days.

SHEDDING: If Velvet Geckoes are feeding on the correct amount of food, they will shed every 4-6 weeks (approx) when young, and 6-8 weeks (approx) when mature. The shedding process usually only takes a few days, but is affected by temperature, with prolonged lower temperatures extending the time between sheds and the time taken to shed. The shedding process is as follows;

- Animal starts to look “washed out” or milky in colour
- This washed out look progresses until the animal looks to be grey/blue.
- This may continue for a few days
- Gecko rubs his snout on an abrasive surface
- Skin peels off from the nose first, just like a snake shedding
- Gecko might need some help removing skin from the folds and joints, especially around the toes.

A gecko in shed will continue to feed and act as if nothing is different.

LOCOMOTION: Velvet Geckoes are quadrupeds, meaning they run around on all four legs. They can jump as well as climb sheer glass walls, and even run upside down across timbers. You will notice that their little toes unfurl as the walk, creating a very graceful gait.

As a Pet

Velvet Geckoes make intriguing pets. Most of the family will be keen to get your gecko out and hold it and let it loose on the floor, on the lounge or practically anywhere else. This is all great fun, and we encourage you to do this regularly. However, care must be taken not to frighten your gecko. Generally speaking, we encourage owners to handle their geckoes for just a few minutes per day, paying particular attention to its body language that it is not terrified and trying to run away.

It is not recommended that you take your gecko outside for a “walk in the garden”. This could actually prove to be more stressful than staying indoors.

Breeding

Many people find enjoyment in seeing their own animals reproduce. If you are wanting to breed your Velvet Geckoes, there are a few things you need to consider. At DoLittle Farm, we enjoy helping people to breed their dragons, and so we encourage you to contact us should you be considering this side of things.

So when you get your gecko home...

- Make sure your cage is set up, thermostat connected and heating is working.
- Make sure water is in place.
- Place your gecko in its home, secure the cage, and leave him alone
- Do not handle your gecko for the first few days
- Fill in any paperwork you might have (eg wildlife licensing)
- Attempt to feed him the day after arriving.
- If he feeds, allow him a second day of feeding, then begin handling.
- Have FUN!!!

Once a year we recommend you have your animal checked by a qualified reptile vet. A list of reptile vets is located on the DoLittle Farm website.

Going Shopping

Here is a shopping list for you to use when gathering supplies in preparation for your gecko

- Appropriate licence for keeping protect animals
- Escape proof cage
- Heatpad
- Thermostat and thermometer
- White day lighting
- Water bowl and food bowl
- Some where to hide, somewhere to bask.
- A clean substrate
- Water spray bottle
- Vitamin and Calcium Supplement
- Cage Cleaner
- Some live insects of appropriate size.

Good luck, Have Fun, Enjoy.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us at

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