



Cuban Knight Anole *Anolis equestris*

- The Cuban knight anole is indigenous to Cuba and surrounding islands, as well as introduced in Florida.
- The largest species of anole, the Cuban knight anole is green to emerald green with a large, conical shaped head and whitish to yellowish streaks and flecks along their sides. The dewlap is pale pinkish white.
- As with other anoles, they are diurnal and highly arboreal.
- Cuban knight anoles may attain longevity of 5-10 years or slightly more under the proper care. They are seldom bred in captivity, and most specimens are wild caught, but they can become acclimated to captivity under the correct conditions.

Size

The Cuban knight anole reaches 12 to 24" making them the largest species of anole.

Housing

As with most anoles, Cuban knight anoles are largely arboreal, and will require an arboreal setup. Provide a sturdy and secure enclosure that is escape proof. Knight anoles are active and arboreal lizards, so provide a 36" by 24" tall, well ventilated terrarium or vivarium. Slightly dampened peat moss, untreated soil, bark substrates, or sphagnum moss can be utilized for a substrate. Additional furnishings for basking, climbing, and seeking refuge are also important components to a knight anole setup, and can include natural or artificial foliage, rocks, vines, or branches. For water, anoles can be misted periodically (which is how these lizards derive most of their hydration) or can be provided a shallow water dish that can be cleaned and replaced regularly.

Additional heating and lighting is also necessary to maintain Cuban knight anoles. Create a sufficient day/night thermal gradient with full spectrum UV lighting with ambient temperatures in the low 80's to mid 90's for a basking spot during the day, and mid 60-mid 70 degrees F at night.

Feeding/Diet

Cuban knight anoles are primarily insectivorous in the wild and in captivity, feeding on insects and other small invertebrates. They may also take small rodents and other reptiles as well due to their size. In captivity, feeder insects such as small roaches, crickets, mealworms, or waxworms are all acceptable for these anoles. Feed 2-3 times weekly in most instances. Cuban knight anoles also require additional gutloading of feeder insects and/or vitamin D3 supplementation for optimal nutrition. They can also be given frozen thawed pinkie mice, but feed these items sparingly as they are high in fat content for these large anoles.

Handling

Cuban knight anoles are seldom bred in captivity to date, with most specimens available being of wild caught origin. While this species can deliver a strong bite, they can become accustomed to and tolerate some levels of handling in captivity. In general however, handling these large anoles (as well as other anole species) should be kept to a minimum whenever possible

Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens

