



Jeweled Lacerta *Lacerta lepida*

- Also known as the Ocellated Lizard.
- Jeweled lacertas are indigenous to a variety of natural and manmade habitats of Southwestern Europe including Spain, Portugal, and France.
- Dorsal color ranges from bright green, to grayish, brown, or greenish brown with numerous dark rosettes on the back and vibrant blue ocelli along the sides in adult males. Females and juveniles are typically less colorful than adult males.
- If provided the proper care, jeweled lacertas can attain longevity of 10-15 years or more.

Size

Jeweled lacertas typically reach 15-24" as adults.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling jeweled lacertas can be housed in a 15-20 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Jeweled lacertas are active, diurnal lizards that require a minimum of a 40-60 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Multiple animals that are housed together must have accordingly larger accommodations. Hatchling and adult lacertas will thrive on a substrate of newspaper, play sand, reptile carpet, reptile bark substances, or potting soil. For water, moderate humidity levels should be kept up. Mist hatchlings and juveniles at least twice per day and adults at least 2-3 times weekly as well as their food. A small, shallow waterbowl can also be provided. Provide artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, slabs, or logs for ample basking and hiding opportunities. Jeweled lacertas can climb, but are not a strictly arboreal species.

Jeweled lacertas are frequent baskers, and thus a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter should be provided. Ideal temperatures for lacertas range from 78-80 degrees F on the cool side and around 90-95 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Lacertas will require overhead UVB incandescent lighting to thrive.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

Feeding/Diet

In the wild, jeweled lacertas are primarily insectivores (eating insects and other invertebrates), although they will catch and consume other prey items as well such as smaller reptiles, and some fruit and vegetable matter.

In captivity, jeweled lacertas can be fed a variety of food items including many types of feeder insects (crickets, mealworms, waxworms, roaches, and superworms), as well as some fruits and vegetables, and even occasionally pre-killed rodents of appropriate size (but feed them these sparingly, if at all). Jeweled lacertas can become quite accustomed to human interaction, and can often become hand fed or will accept food from a bowl or dish.

Providing calcium and vitamin D3 supplements or supplementation (i.e. dusting) in Jeweled lacerta diets whenever possible is also important.

Handling

Jeweled lacertas can often, at least initially, be a shy and skittish species, but can become quite docile and tolerant of handling once acclimated to their surroundings. Gentle and deliberate handling should take place with lacertas, as they can drop their tails when roughly handled or restrained too tightly.

****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****