



## New Caledonia Giant Gecko *Rhacodactylus leachianus*

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- These geckos are native to New Caledonia north east of Australia.
- Often referred to as “leachies”. They are the largest extant species of gecko.
- Displays “island gigantism” where it is larger than similar species on the mainland.
- Medium to large robustly built gecko that can be brown, tan, to yellowish brown with “dirty” cream colored to white spots, loose skin, and a relatively short tail.
- If provided the proper care, “leachies” can attain longevity of 15-20 years or more.

### **Size**

Ranges from 12 -14” as adults. Sometimes up to 18”.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Provide a 10-15 gallon tall terrarium or enclosure for hatchling and juvenile “leachies. House adults in 20-30 gallon tall glass or screen enclosure that is about 18”X18”X24”. These geckos can be maintained on newspaper, paper towel, peat moss, or coco fiber. Provide ample artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, or logs for ample basking, climbing, and hiding opportunities. For moisture, provide a small bowl or dish of fresh water 2-3 times per week and mist once to twice weekly.

Ideal temperatures for these geckos range from 72-80 degrees F room temperature. Do not keep them at over 85 degrees F or below 65 degrees F. Provide a daily photoperiod or light cycle of at least 12 hours. No additional UVA/UVB lighting is required for these geckos.

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, giant Caledonian geckos are omnivorous, meaning they eat insects and various fruits. Occasionally they will even consume small rodents.

In captivity, many commercially available crested gecko diets are available that will also work for leachies, and contain most, if not all essential proteins, vitamins, and minerals needed. Insects such as crickets and roaches, can also be offered but should not be larger than snout to eye on the gecko. Feed geckos 2-3 times weekly. Gutload feeder insects by feeding them quality diets, and dust them with calcium and vitamin D3 for added nutritional value. Offer food in a small dish or pan.

### **Handling**

Leachies are geckos in which temperaments and response to handling vary greatly from individual to individual. Some tolerate moderate levels of handling even as hatchlings, while others display “cage aggression” and may require more effort and patience to handle. Gloves may be worn when handling a more cage aggressive leachie. In general however, leachies tend to be not as readily handleable as their smaller relative the crested gecko. Handle any of these geckos gently and deliberately but do not drop or injure the animal. Take care to not grab your gecko by its tail or it may detach if your gecko perceives you as a predator or a threat.

\*\*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\*\*