



Panther Chameleon *Furcifer pardalis*

- The Panther chameleon is indigenous to the island of Madagascar and surrounding islands near Africa.
- Panther chameleons are a large chameleon species that can vary considerably in color depending on locale and mood, with reds, oranges, blues, greens, yellows, blacks, or whites to emerald green or turquoise being noted on a highly variable patterning of darker bands, stripes, and/or spots. Females and juvenile panther chameleons are less vibrantly colored, and the crests on both genders of panther chameleons tends to be low and less distinct.
- Chameleons will change color depending on their health, current mood, and overall temperatures.
- Chameleons are specialized tree dwellers, and have prehensile tails and “zygodactyl” feet for gripping and climbing.
- Eyes can function and rotate independently of one another.
- If provided the proper care, panther chameleons can attain longevity of 5-8 years on average.

Size

Adult Panther chameleons range in size from 10” to 18”, with males being the larger of the two genders.

Housing

Housing must be sealed, well ventilated, and escape proof. Provide a minimum of a 2’ X 2’ X 3’ fully screened tall enclosure for adults. Provide ample artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, vines, branches or logs for ample basking, climbing, and hiding opportunities. Substrate is optional, but substrates such as cypress mulch, sphagnum moss, or coconut fiber can be used. Panther chameleons do not recognize standing water in a water bowl; instead mist them at least twice daily for moisture and hydration.

Provide a lighting and temperature gradient for panther chameleons from 85 degrees F to 95 degrees F. Use an infrared night time bulb to create nighttime temperature gradients of 75 to 85 degrees F. Use florescent, broad spectrum, and UVB lighting for optimal health of panther chameleons.

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 captivity, feed panther chameleons a varied insect/invertebrate diet of crickets, mealworms, waxworms, and even earthworms. These chameleons will occasionally eat green leaf vegetables as well. Feed these chameleons 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 or by hand.

Handling

As with most chameleons, panther chameleons will generally not tolerate frequent handling, and it should be kept to low levels. Should a chameleon be handled, it is important to remember to not forcefully pick up the animal, which may lead to further stress and/or injury.

Allow a chameleon to walk onto your hands or gently coax them to do so if possible. Generally, chameleons are better suited as display animals.

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