

Panther Chameleon Care Sheet

Habitat

It is important to choose a cage that has good ventilation to prevent sickness from stagnant, moist air. At least two of the sides should be screened to allow air flow, but more are better.

Reptariums are an excellent choice, since the entire structure is screen. The cage should be at least 2 feet wide by 2 feet deep by 4 feet high. Most people do not use substrate at the bottom of the cage. Substrate provides hiding places for live food, and chameleons might ingest it when hunting with their sticky tongue.

Proper lighting includes two types: a heat lamp for basking and an ultraviolet-B (UVB) light for vitamin D production and calcium utilization. Panther Chameleons need an ambient temperature between 75 and 85 degrees in the day and about 65 degrees at night. The basking area needs to be between 85 and 95 degrees, no more than 100. The bulb wattage necessary will depend somewhat on the temperature of your house, but probably a bulb between 50 and 60 will be sufficient. Chameleons will move closer or farther from the lamp according to their needs. The ultraviolet bulb must be a 5.0 UVB bulb, as 10.0 UVB can blind your chameleon. UVB light is important for proper bone growth and should not be blocked by glass or plastic.

Provide a fun environment for your chameleon with live or plastic plants and vines. Since chameleons are arboreal, the more climbing structures provided, the happier they will be. Plants also help keep them calm, giving them places to hide. Make sure live plants are non-toxic to chameleons. Safe plants are Pothos, Ficus benjamina, Schefflera, and Hibiscus. Other safe plants can be found at <http://flchams.com/chameleon-safe-plant-list/>.

Diet

Chameleons are insect eaters, and the more variety the healthier your chameleon will be. Insects available for purchase are crickets, phoenix worms, butterworms, silkworms, dubia roaches, and hornworms. Waxworms have high fat content, so they should be fed as treats. Mealworms are not advised due to high chitin content, which can cause impaction.

Unlike most pets, providing water in a bowl does not work for chameleons unless they have been trained by first dripping water constantly into the bowl. Chameleons need moving water to drink. This can be provided with a dripper, which is sold at pet stores. They also drink water off misted plants. Misting also provides humidity, another necessity. In summer, I like to use a fogger, because it also causes dripping and is great at increasing humidity.

Lastly it is important to provide calcium with vitamin D3 and other vitamin supplements. You can dust feeders with the supplements twice a week or feed the supplements (gut load) to your crickets or other feeders. I like to use Repashy Superfood calcium plus LoD. Be careful to not overdose your chameleon on supplements. Fat soluble vitamins like A, D, E, and K can store in fatty tissue to toxic levels. Too much vitamin D or calcium can also be harmful.