## **YVCipedia REPTILE**

Crested Gecko Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

Crested geckos (*Correlophus ciliatus*) are small, arboreal lizards native to New Caledonia. Recognizable for their fringed “eyelash” crests above the eyes and along the body, they’re a popular reptile pets thanks to their manageable size, gentle temperament, and minimal heating requirements.

Adults typically reach **7–9 inches** (including tail) and live **15–20+ years** with good care. Naturally nocturnal, they are most active at night and twilight.

## **Housing & Environment**

Crested geckos need **vertical space** for climbing and exploring. A single adult should have at least an **18×18×24-inch terrarium** (approx. 30 gallons), with larger enclosures always preferred.

Include plenty of climbing branches, cork bark, vines, and live or artificial plants. Provide multiple secure **hiding spots** at varying heights to support natural behaviors.

**Habitat Highlights:**

* **Minimum size:** 18×18×24" terrarium for one adult
* **Orientation:** Tall/vertical enclosure preferred
* **Substrate:** Paper towel (easy cleaning), coconut fiber, bioactive soil mix
* **Décor:** Branches, cork tubes, vines, foliage for climbing and hiding
* **Hides:** Multiple levels; horizontal and vertical options
* **Cleaning:** Spot-clean daily; deep clean monthly

## **Temperature, Lighting & Humidity**

Crested geckos are **tropical but cool-climate lizards**, well-suited to average room temps. They generally do **not** require supplemental heating if the room is kept in the ideal range.

**Daytime temperatures:**

* **72–78°F** ideal
* Can tolerate 65–82°F safely
* Avoid prolonged temps over **82°F**, which can cause heat stress

**Nighttime temperatures:**

* Can drop safely to **65–70°F**

Humidity should average **50–70%**, with daily misting to create fluctuations and maintain hydration. A **digital hygrometer** helps monitor levels. Provide a **moist hide** or dense foliage to create higher-humidity microhabitats.

**Lighting:**

* **UVB is optional but recommended and believe to be beneficial.** Low-level UVB (2–5%) supports vitamin D3 production and bone health.
* Provide a **12-hour day/night cycle** with ambient light or low-level LED/UVB lighting.

**Heating & Lighting Tips:**

* **Heat:** Usually unnecessary unless room temps are too low
* **Lighting:** Optional but recommended low-level UVB recommended
* **Humidity:** 50–70% with daily misting; ensure drying between mists
* **Monitoring:** Digital thermometers and hygrometers recommended

## **Water & Hydration**

Crested geckos primarily **lick droplets** from leaves and décor. Mist the enclosure lightly **1–2× daily** to provide drinking opportunities and maintain humidity.

Include a **shallow water dish** refreshed daily, even if not all geckos drink from standing water.

**Hydration Notes:**

* Daily misting routine (morning/evening)
* Fresh, shallow water dish at all times
* Allow partial drying between mistings to avoid mold

## **Diet & Nutrition**

Crested geckos are **omnivorous**, eating fruit, nectar, and insects in the wild. In captivity, they thrive on **commercial complete gecko diets** formulated as powders mixed with water.

**Staple diet:**

* Commercial powder diets (e.g., Pangea, Repashy) prepared fresh per instructions

**Live insects:**

* Optional 1–2× weekly treat (crickets, roaches, black soldier fly larvae)
* Always gut-load insects and dust with calcium if offered

**Feeding schedule:**

* Juveniles: Daily
* Adults: Every other day or even less frequent if obesity is a concern.

**Supplementation:**

* Most commercial diets are complete; extra calcium with D3 recommended if feeding live insects.

## **Healthcare & Veterinary Care**

Schedule an **initial veterinary exam** soon after acquisition and **annual wellness exams**. Common health issues include:

* **Metabolic bone disease** (from poor calcium/vitamin D3 intake)
* **Shedding issues** (from low humidity)
* **Dehydration**
* **Parasites** (especially with live insect feeders)
* **Floppy Tail Syndrome** (seen in some over-handled or improperly housed geckos)

**Warning signs:**

* Refusal to eat or unexplained weight loss
* Persistent stuck shed, especially on toes
* Lethargy or weakness
* Abnormal stools

## **Behavior & Handling**

Crested geckos are generally **calm and handleable** but can jump unpredictably. Always handle gently and over a secure surface. Let them walk onto your hand rather than grabbing from above.

They’re nocturnal and may be more active or willing to explore at dusk or night.

**Handling Tips:**

* Approach slowly and from the side
* Support body fully with open hands
* Expect sudden jumps—keep handling low over surfaces
* Short, frequent handling sessions to build trust

## **Enrichment & Habitat Design**

Provide a **complex, vertical environment** with lots of climbing and hiding options. Rotate décor periodically to stimulate exploration. Live plants improve humidity and aesthetics.

**Enrichment Ideas:**

* Cork tubes, branches, vines
* Live or artificial broad-leaf plants
* Multiple hides at different heights
* Mist daily to encourage natural drinking behavior

## **Fun Facts & FAQs**

* Once thought extinct, **rediscovered in 1994** in New Caledonia.
* Unlike many geckos, they **lack sticky toe pads** and use tiny claws to climb.
* Can **drop their tails** if stressed; it does not regenerate.
* Known for **big, expressive eyes** and eyelash-like crests.
* Thrive on **commercial complete diets** for easy feeding.

### **Supplies Checklist**

* Vertical terrarium (≥18×18×24″) with secure screen top
* Safe substrate (paper towel, coconut fiber, bioactive)
* Multiple branches, vines, and hides
* Live or artificial plants
* Shallow water dish
* Misting bottle or automatic mister
* Digital thermometer and hygrometer
* Low-level UVB light (optional but recommended)
* Commercial gecko diet powders
* Live feeder insects (optional treat)
* Calcium and vitamin supplements (for live feeders)
* Secure carrier for veterinary visits

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