

# The Chameleon Kingdom's



## General Panther Chameleon Care Sheet

### **Cage:**

The bigger cage you can provide your chameleon as an adult, the better. Remember, these are arboreal lizards that spend their whole life in trees, or shrubs off the ground, so vertical space is favored over horizontal space. Cages **MUST** be appropriately sized to your chameleon so the animal is able to effectively find its food. A small chameleon in a large adult cage may not be able to efficiently find his food like it should, especially when the most important growth period of a chameleon is when they are young. It is highly recommended that you change the size of the chameleon's enclosure as it grows. In general, chameleons must be housed in fully screened fresh air cages. These screen cages allow for proper ventilation, and prevent humidity from being too high for too long, and becoming stagnant. This stagnant and humid air can lead to respiratory infections. Some keepers successfully use TALL glass vivariums where only two sides (front and top) are screen, but The Chameleon Kingdom does not recommend this caging method to new and inexperienced keepers. Glass caging, if done correctly, can bring great levels of success, but this care sheet applies to screen caging husbandry methods only. Screen caging is much more readily available, so new keepers should start with screen enclosures.

### **Lighting:**

The most common lights that are used with panther chameleons are ZOOMED UVB 5.0 or 10.0 linear bulbs. These UVB 5.0 bulbs are used with animals from birth to around 8 months old. After 8 months old, a UVB 10.0 should be used. The Chameleon Kingdom uses and recommends linear UVB bulbs as opposed to compact bulbs. Some of these compact bulbs have been directly linked to eye damage, and even blindness, so it is best to avoid them. **A UVB light is a necessity as chameleons need UVB to help break down calcium.** A basking branch should be positioned about six inches from the UVB bulb. The light cycle for a chameleon should be 12 hours on, 12

hours off. The photo cycle of a chameleon will change during times of the year when there is less daylight, and even if the chameleon housed indoors cannot see a window with natural sunlight, they still sense these changes and light cycles and roost up to sleep early, so your lighting schedule may be changed to 10 hours on and 14 hours off. **\*ALSO, I recommend that you replace your UVB lights after six months. Even if they the bulb is still emitting light, it may not be emitting the proper amount of UVB, and your animal runs the risk of acquiring MBD (Metabolic Bone Disease). UVB Lighting can NOT penetrate glass or plastic, so if you use a light housing with a cover, be sure to remove it, otherwise your UVB light is doing nothing.**

### **Temperature:**

Panther Chameleons can tolerate temperatures from 65F at night to 95F under their basking light. For younger panthers below 5 months of age, a basking spot in the upper 80's is favorable. Room temperature should be around 75F during the day and around 70F at night. Do not allow nighttime temperatures to drop below 65F. Chameleons are ectotherms, which means they must seek outside heat sources to raise their body temperature to properly digest and metabolize their food. For an adult chameleon, many keepers use a 50 watt basking bulb that is about six inches from a basking perch to create the 93ish degree(F) basking spot. For a young chameleon up to 5 months old, a 30w bulb more appropriate in a smaller cage to create a basking spot in the upper 80's.

### **Humidity/Watering:**

I keep my chameleons anywhere from 30% to 70% humidity. Humidity levels will rise after misting sessions. Average household humidity is around 45%. The Chameleon Kingdom uses and recommends live plants in a chameleon cage. Plant leaves do not soak up water like silk plants, and do not dry out quickly like plastic ones. Live plants maintain proper humidity levels which are crucial to the chameleon's hydration levels, and shedding cycles. **Panther Chameleons do not recognize standing water**, so they should be misted three times a day to boost humidity and for drinking. A misting should get all the leaves wet and last at least 1 minute. Mist longer if possible. Allow the cage to COMPLETELY dry before misting again. For keepers that cannot be around most of the day, a dripper can be used to supply the chameleon with a steady water source throughout the day. ZOOMEDS little dripper, or a similar product is perfect. Homemade drippers can also be made for less than a few dollars.

### **Nutrition:**

I believe that feeders and supplementation are the most important part of chameleon husbandry. We know that there is still much that is unknown about what feeders and supplements are most beneficial, much like human nutrition, so it is essential that we provide our chameleons a wide variety of feeders that include crickets, superworms, silkworms, hornworms, roaches, grasshoppers, and flies. Crickets are generally the staple feeder for most keepers. All of these feeders are easily gut loaded and provide nutritional value to chameleons. Gut loading is critical to offering nutritious feeders and SUPPLEMENTS SHOULD NOT REPLACE PROPER

GUTLOADING. Also, many feeders should be dusted with vitamins according to their age and size. The Chameleon Kingdom uses and recommends ZOOMEDS reptivite with D3 (which should be used twice a month), Reocal calcium with D3 (twice monthly), and Reocal calcium WITHOUT D3 (2 times weekly). A 1 month supplementing schedule has been provided for you to follow. **This is just a general schedule**, and may need to be fine tuned to your chameleon depending on age. Dust insects LIGHTLY in a Dixie cup until a fine coating is on the feeders. Less is more with supplements!

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
off	Calcium	off	C D3	off	Calcium	off
off	Calcium	off	Vit w/D3	off	Calcium	off
off	Calcium	off	C D3	off	Calcium	off
off	Calcium	off	Vit w/D3	off	Calcium	off

Calcium = Reocal Calcium without D3

C D3 = Reocal Calcium WITH D3

Vit w/D3 = ZOOMEDS Reptivite with D3

**DISCLAIMER:**

This care sheet is in no way **THE** way to keep chameleons. Every keeper and breeder has their own recommendations and methods, but the methods described in this care sheet are the methods that The Chameleon Kingdom uses with great success. In general, this care sheet has all the information you need to successfully keep your first chameleon!

If you have any questions, email The Chameleon Kingdom at

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