

Veiled Chameleon

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species profile: veiled chameleon

The Veiled Chameleon is the most popular and easiest Chameleon to care for. However, Chameleons as a genus are "high maintenance," so this species still requires careful attention. Unlike other Chameleons, the Veiled Chameleon does not adapt its coloration to its surroundings; instead, color change is more a physiological response to emotion.

Species Profile: Veiled Chameleon

Scientific Name:	<i>Chamaeleo calyptratus</i>
Natural Environment:	Western Yemen and southern Saudi Arabia
Average Size:	Males can reach 17"-24" in length, females can reach 10"-14"
Average Life Span:	Up to 5 years for breeding females, 7-10 years for males
Appearance:	Males are usually more strikingly colored, with bands of bright gold, green, and blue, mixed with yellow, orange, or black that circle their green body. Females are also shades of green but are mottled with shades of tan, orange, white, and sometimes yellow. They both have a casque, which is a helmet-like ridge on top of their heads.

Habitat

Lighting:	Use a daytime UVB full-spectrum fluorescent light for 12 hours a day
Temperature:	80's by day, 70's by night. A basking area of 90°-100°F is critical.
Humidity:	50-60%
Housing:	A screen cage with vinyl-coated metal mesh of at least 3 ft x 3 ft x 4 ft high is recommended for adults. Due to their arboreal lifestyle they require climbing and basking branches. Vegetation should always be available, with branches underneath some of the leaves to provide hiding and sleeping areas. Keep only one chameleon per habitat. Clean drinking water is a necessity. However, they will not drink from a standing dish, so you will need to mist the enclosure or set up a drip system. Since this can cause excess moisture on the cage bottom, it's best to use cages with screened floors and as little substrate as possible. The cage should be placed at eye level or above.
Diet/Feeding:	A variety (at least 5) of gut-loaded live insects . A small amount of plant matter, such as mustard or collard greens, can be offered. A calcium supplement should be given.
Behavior/Interaction:	Shy and solitary, they should only be handled for short amounts of time. When startled or threatened, they may puff up with air and hiss. They may also curl into a ball and "play 'possum" as they darken in color. It takes considerable time for them to feel secure enough to uncurl and move about afterwards.