



## Tree Dtella Gecko (*Gehyra variegata*) Care sheet

Tree dtella, or variegated, geckos are relatively common geckos found throughout Western Australia, Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. Due to their large distribution, tree dtella geckos can be found in dry forests, woodlands, coastal dunes, and outcrops. They are moderately sized at a length of roughly 12.5cm including the tail and 5cm without a tail. When these geckos are threatened or caught by the tail, as a defense mechanism, they have the ability to break off their tails and eventually regrow them (sometimes even more than one and usually shorter and broader than the original)! Another intriguing feature of tree dtella geckos is that they highly vary in color from shades of brown to blue to grey with either darker or lighter arranged blotches. These markings may be difficult to appreciate during the day; however, as tree dtella geckos are nocturnal, they spend most daylight hours asleep and explore throughout the night. Keep an eye out for these guys when walking through older buildings and letterboxes, especially during the night!

**HOUSING:** Tree dtella geckos can readily be housed in glass enclosures, with a minimum length of 45cm. Ensure to have a secure, breathable lid, such as fly mesh, however, as these geckos can climb smooth, vertical surfaces and are fast. Being arboreal species, tree dtella geckos enjoy climbing and often hides under tree barks, rocks, and fallen branches. That being said, the height of the enclosure should be greater than the length to provide sufficient space for climbing. Furthermore, providing ample amounts of natural branches and rocks is essential. There are many options for substrate including moss, leaf litter, paper towel, wood shavings, and sand.

**TEMPERATURE & LIGHTING:** A temperature gradient should always be provided by placing a heating lamp at one side of the enclosure, ensuring the gecko cannot directly reach the lamp and get burned. The warm end should reach 28-32°C while the cool end should be maintained between 20-24°C. Ensure nighttime temperatures do not fall below 16°C.

Being a nocturnal species, long exposure to bright lights can harm the tree dtella gecko's eyes. That being said, having a low-brightness light source on during the day, roughly 12 hours per day, is ideal. UVB lighting is not required for these geckos.

**WATER:** Fresh, clean water should be provided at all times in a solid, spill-proof container. The dish should be shallow enough for the geckos to stand in with their heads above the water. Placing the water dish below the heat source will help increase the humidity. Ensure the water is changed daily. During the summer months, it helps to mist the enclosure with dechlorinated water 2-3 times each week to increase the humidity and prevent shedding problems.

**FOOD:** Tree dtella geckos consume a range of small insects and arthropods including crickets, cockroaches, and even spiders! Ideally, the food sources should be gut loaded with calcium and





vitamins a couple of hours before feeding. Adult geckos can be fed 1-2 times per week, with a food source no larger than the space between the gecko's eyes, whereas juveniles can be fed 3-4 times per week, and hatchlings need to be offered food daily.

**HEALTH PROBLEMS:** Reptiles in general are very good at hiding their health problems until they become very serious. For this reason, it is very important that you get your gecko checked over by an experienced reptile veterinarian every 6-12 months.

Common problems where veterinary advice is recommended are dysecdysis (trouble shedding), prolonged inappetence, lethargy, mite infection, wheezing, abnormal movement, and regurgitation.

