

## **CARE OF HERBIVOROUS LIZARDS (EMPHASIS ON GREEN IGUANA)**

**HOUSING:** Juveniles may be kept in aquariums 2.5 times the length of the animal (including tail). Adults will require very large enclosures with perches near the top, they rarely leave the treetops in the wild. These reptiles are solitary in the wild, and housing them together (physically or visually) will cause stress leading to illness. Provide visual security in the form of a hide box or artificial or edible foliage. Particulate substrate small enough for the lizard to ingest is not recommended. Provide humidity appropriate to species-drippers or misters are necessary for the tropical lizards.

**LIGHTING:** Provide a 12:12 light cycle for all reptiles. Reptiles must have total darkness at night in order to maintain a healthy feeding response. These lizards require a source of UVB, whether from a quality lamp or natural direct sunlight (best-30 minutes per week is enough).

**HEATING:** The green iguana's optimal temperature zone is 82-100F. This range should be provided as a gradient across the enclosure with the warmest point up near the animal's perching area for basking. The coolest part of the enclosure should never drop below the low end of the range-this will affect the animal's ability to digest food, metabolize nutrients and fight off illness. Hot rocks should never be used.

**FEEDING:** Never feed animal protein to herbivorous species-it will damage their kidneys. Iguanas are folivores, feeding on leaves only in the wild. Contact us for specifics, but basically feed a reptile salad-we have a handout on this.

**VETERINARY CARE:** Annual exams with fecal exams done every six months. We recommend spaying or neutering iguanas and other large lizards to prevent dangerous aggression in males and egg-binding in females. Please always call your lizard's veterinarian with questions and concerns. This is a better resource than pet stores or the internet.