

Green Iguana (Iguana Iguana)

General Information

Green Iguanas are quite a large lizard that hails from Central and South America. They are predominantly green in colour, but with a mix of other colours making up the markings and pattern along the length of its body. The male of the species are normally easily identifiable as they will be proportionately larger than the females and will usually have broader heads.

Brief overview of needs

In the wild, Green Iguanas will often be found in trees and bushes overhanging pools and streams. It stands to reason that they would therefore benefit from a tree branch installed in their enclosure and that the longest measurement of the cage should be its height for that reason. Because of their rapid rate of growth and the heating and lighting equipment they need, purpose made vivaria are probably the most appropriate. Iguanas are best housed in as large an enclosure as possible from the

very beginning. It will be necessary to provide a local hot spot around 40°C, while the coolest part of the should be nearer 28°C. Also make a thermal gradient in the enclosure (warmer at one end than at the other.) Iguanas may



be kept singly or in groups, but of course the more lizards kept in each enclosure, the larger the enclosure should be. Young Iguanas need at least 12" x 12" x 24" of space but considerably more when they are adult. Males may have a tendency to fight if more than one adult is present in the accommodation and you must be aware of this and monitor it carefully. Overall, as mentioned, the enclosure should be as large possible and you should provide hiding places and screens where practicable.

Iguanas are rightly described as omnivorous, but in the main, the diet should be vegetarian. Insects and other animal items are eaten in the wild, however these are only a minor part of the diet and are not necessary in captivity. Therefore, captive animals should reflect this situation and food like crickets and mealworms should only constitute a very small part of the diet. The majority should be made up of vegetables with some salad and fruit. Items such as cabbage, kale, grated carrot and apple is typical of foodstuff to offer. In fact anything may tempt the Iguana as long as it is edible and as much variety as possible is beneficial. To achieve a good balance in regards to the vitamin and mineral content, sprinkle the food with commercially available supplements, available both at specialist pet shops and online. Green Iguanas will obviously need to drink and they may try to bathe in fresh water. As with all other reptile enclosure, ensure that you have a water bowl of reasonable proportions and at least big and heavy enough that it would not be knocked over easily.

Finally

To handle this type of lizard the whole animal should be gently grasped around the shoulder region and the other hand used to support the animal from below. Fully grown, these are large animals and you must take special care when



handling them. They have large, sharp claws that can cause deep and very painful scratches. Another thing to watch out for is the tail that is sometimes used to 'whip' a potential threat. This 'whipping' is extremely painful and can cause tissue damage on humans.