



Veiled Chameleon Care Sheet

Basic facts:

Origin: Arabian Peninsula; subtropical, higher altitude regions but also in areas with drier climates

Sexual dimorphism:

Females: smaller casque, generally a light green with thin bands of aqua and yellow-orange extending dorsoventrally; up to 25-35cm snout-tail-length and 90-120g;

Males: larger casque and a swelling at the base of the tail, **spur on the hindfeet**, coloration duller with a large variety with thicker dorsoventral bands; up to 60cm snout-tail-length and 100-200g

Longevity: females 4-6y; males 6-8y

Chameleons will change their coloration to display emotions and as a reaction to stress or health conditions. The common belief that it is for the sole purpose of camouflage is incorrect.

Veiled chameleons are territorial and should therefore **only one chameleon per enclosure** is acceptable.

Enclosure:

Veiled chameleons are an arboreal species so we need to provide a **tall vertical enclosure** with a variety of plants with **criss-crossing branches** of various diameter. This allows the chameleon to climb to areas of ideal temperature and also provides hiding opportunities. Real plants are recommended e.g. hibiscus, Ficus benjamina, Dandelion.

A mesh enclosure with **good ventilation** is ideal.

The **MINIMUM** enclosure size is **60x60x120cm** for an adult – remember size of the full-grown animal!

Technically **no substrate** is needed (unless egg-laying female). The bottom tray should allow drainage without possibility of crickets escaping. These are hard to come by commercially (see DIY option:

<https://chameleonacademy.com/case-study-exo-terra-large-x-tall-cage-build/>). If you do use substrate it



should be absorbant and retain moisture (e.g. fine soil or sand, Astro turf, paper, large stones or large pieces of cork bark; AVOID perlite, vermiculite, small pebbles, wood shavings, wood chips, coconut, peat fibre or coarse sand). Females of egg-laying age should be provided with a lay bin that is filled with 10cm of sand/soil mixture. Females can lay infertile eggs even in the absence of a male.

Heating: The heat source should be located above the enclosure in an off-centre position. There should be a **heat gradient** throughout the enclosure. The heat gradient is best measured with two thermometers, one in the region of the basking spot, one at a distance or with a maximum-minimum-thermometer. A **basking spot** should be created **about 20cm under the heat lamp** with a barrier in place so that the animal cannot be in direct contact (e.g. behind mesh or caged). Incandescent lights may be preferable as they emit some visible light. Ceramic heaters have a longer life-span and are good if nighttime heat needed. Veiled chameleons tolerate a wide range of temperatures.

- Basking temp 30°C
- Temperature drop of ~10°C at night compared to daytime
- Daytime: 22-25°C; Nighttime: 13-18°C

Misting system (e.g. adding a Dripper plant from Exo Terra) or regular manual misting. A **hygrometer** can be used to establish an overall humidity level of 50-60% during the day (which can be increased to 80% at night). These chameleons will drink droplets from leaves and are unlikely to make use of a water bowl.

UV light: It is absolutely **ESSENTIAL to provide UVB light** in order to prevent health conditions such as secondary hyperparathyroidism (a.k.a. Metabolic Bone Disease). The perfect light depends on the size of the enclosure but a good starting point is e.g. Exoterra Reptile UVB 100 (formerly known as Repti Glo 5.0). However the end goal should be a T5 high output linear bulb with reflector 5.0 strength. The wattage of the bulb depends on the size of the enclosure and the distance to the basking spot. The UV lamp should emit both UVA and UVB rays and be positioned **20-30cm from the basking spot** (measured from the top of the chameleon when at basking spot). The UV light should be left on for at least 6 hours a day but ideally over 12 daytime hours. **UV lights should be changed out every 6-8 months** as the strength will be significantly reduced thereafter. UVB output can be measured with a solar meter but these are usually fairly pricey. It is important to note that **sunlight** through a window is **NOT a sufficient source of UVB!**

Visible light should be on for 12 hours per day and thereafter the animal should be given total darkness.

Desinfection of the cage and its components can be done with F10SCXD and F10SC.



Food:

Veiled chameleon primarily eat **insects**. These must be smaller than chameleon's head to avoid choking. Growing or gravid chameleons should be fed daily, adult every other day. Only live insects should be fed (e.g. crickets, silkworms, superworms, dubia roaches, black soldier fly larvae, hornworms) and feeding a variety is key. Mealworms and waxworms should only be given on occasion as they are high in fat and not easily digestible. Be cautious to feed insects from the garden and avoid ants. It is critical to not overfeed chameleons as **obesity** can lead to life-threatening conditions.

Feeder insects should have a heat source. Insects are not nutritionally complete and receive a rich diet of fresh, nutritious food (fruit/veg/grain) = gut-loading. Food fed to insects can be enriched with small amounts of calcium supplements 72 hours prior to feeding, however it should be monitored that food is then still palatable to the insects. Immediately prior to feeding your chameleon put the selected amount of insects in a plastic container/bag and **dust them with calcium powder WITHOUT Vit D3** (e.g. Exoterra Calcium supplement). Insects should be fed immediately thereafter and any uneaten insects should be discarded after 30min. Remember that the calcium powder will fall off the insects when they move and clean themselves, therefore the time window is fairly short. Do not place a water dish in the insect enclosure as they will likely drown, rather offer fruit (e.g. orange slices) as a source of hydration.

DO NOT feed fruit to your chameleon! Veiled chameleons also do not need vegetables in their diet, but they may be seen to take a bite out of the plants in the enclosure. Vitamin supplementation (e.g. Exo Terra Multi-Vitamin) can be dusted onto insects 2x month.

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Information on this care sheet is the opinion of the creator. This care sheet will be adapted if updated information becomes available. For more information please visit the following websites:

- <https://www.chameleonforums.com/care/chameleons/>
- <https://chameleonacademy.com/veiled-chameleon-care/>

To order lights and supplements you can contact Exotic Pets Overberg via whatsapp (071-142-2953) or email admin@exoticpetsoverberg.co.za. Or visit our online shop at www.exoticpetsoverberg.co.za

For feeder insects: <https://jozibugs.co.za/>