



Jackson Chameleon

Chamaeleo jacksonii

(There are three recognized subspecies: *C. j. jacksonii*, *C. j. merumontanus*, and *C. j. xantholophus*.)

Adult Size	Jackson's chameleons range in size from about 9-13 inches in length (including the tail).	Life Span 4-6 years in captivity. Females 3-5
Male/Female Differences	Males tend to be larger than females of the same sub species. Males of all the subspecies have 3 horns that make them look like mini-triceratops, 2 sub-ocular horns below the eyes and one horn on the snout. Females of some sub-species do have horns, but sometimes they are less developed than those of the males. All Jackson's chameleons are ovoviviparous, meaning they produce young by the egg hatching inside the body of the parent. Another term for this is live -bearing.	
Compatibility	Jackson's chameleons are territorial and should be housed individually. However multiple females with a single male have been known to be successful, given the appropriate size environment.	
Origin	Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa as well as Ethiopia. More recently, this species has been introduced and has established populations on most of the Hawaiian islands and some other areas.	
Climate	In its natural range, the Jackson's Chameleon lives in cool, humid mountain slopes with significant rainfall and vegetation.	
Day Cycle	Diurnal	
Temperature	A daytime temperature gradient of about 70-80F should be provided, with a basking spot up to a maximum of 85F At night, they should have a temperature drop of about 10-15 degrees, so heating at night may not be required if your home doesn't fall below 65-70F.	
Lighting	Chameleons need a full spectrum cool burning ultraviolet (UVA/UVB) light source to prevent vitamin D3 and calcium deficiencies. Use an infrared heat bulb as well. The reason for the infa-red bulb is the keep a controlled temperature, that doesn't hinder the animal's circadian rhythm. Keep the UV light on for 10-12 hours per day. Remember these	

	<p>bulbs need to be replaced every 6 months or based on manufacturer's recommendations. Chameleons also benefit from spending time outdoors in natural sunlight when the temperatures are appropriate. Be Careful, chameleons do NOT tolerate temperatures above 90F well.</p>
Humidity	<p>Jackson's chameleons need a humidity level of 50-80%. This can be accomplished by misting the plants in the enclosure regularly twice a day. This can also be achieved with the use of a drip or misting system. It's recommended that you invest in a hygrometer to measure the humidity.</p>
Habitat/Territory	<p>Terrestrial biomes aka rain forests are the nature habitat. They prefer the thick forests and thickets in the mountainous regions, where there is enough cover to hide from predators. They are primarily tree dwellers, and would only come to the forest floor to mate or lay eggs.</p>
Substrate/Bedding	<p>Potted plants can be placed on a plain paper substrate for easier cleaning while still allowing live planting in the cage. Do not use smaller wood chips or any other substrate that could be accidentally ingested and cause blockages.</p>
Hiding Place/Den	<p>They will spend most of their time on the plant limbs. They can be seen swaying back and forth mimicking a leaf swaying in the wind. This is used as a defense mechanism to avoid predators.</p>
Cage Type	<p>Chameleons should never be kept in a glass terrarium. They need the ventilation provided by a mesh enclosure. Vertical space is essential and a minimum size of 24 inches high by 24 inches wide by 36 inches tall is recommended. Cleanliness in the cage is vital in preventing bacterial and mold growth. Provide lots of sturdy non-toxic plants and branches for your chameleon to climb, A good selection of branches of different sizes should be provided, making sure there are secure perches at different levels and temperatures within the cage. Ficus trees may be used with caution, the tree sap can irritate the chameleon. pothos, hibiscus, schefflera and dracaena can be used in the cage as well.</p>
Diet	<p>Chameleons are insectivores so they should be fed a variety of insects. Crickets are the most common form of the diet but meal worms, super worms, waxworms, hornworms, roaches, silkworms, flies, fruit flies, and grasshoppers. All insects should be gut loaded (see our care sheet in Gut Loading) before feeding them to your chameleon. In addition, some chameleons will also eat a bit of plant matter including live plants in the cage so use non-toxic plants. Do not leave uneaten live prey in the cage for extended periods of time as the insects may attack and injure your chameleon, or start to decompose</p>
Supplements	<p>Dust insects with a calcium/vitamin D3 supplement (e.g. Rep-Cal) two to three times a week. You should also use a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement once a week. Some experts recommend choosing a supplement that does not contain vitamin A. Excessive vitamin A can lead to Gout or edema which is a swelling of the legs/body parts.</p>
Diet Precautions	<p>Do not use outdoor insects, some are toxic and are vectors of parasites. They have the chance of being exposed to pesticides that can severely</p>

	harm your chameleon. Avoid insects too large for the animal to eat; this can cause choking, stress or even death. Excess synthetic vitamin A can make them prone to gout and edema.
Feeding	5-7 insects per feeding is sufficient. Feeding from a high sided dish hung below a branch will help the chameleon find its food quicker as well as help to monitor the diet. It's a good idea to offer water/spray the cage before you feed them. This ensures the tongue is lubricated and functioning properly.
Water Source	Chameleons will not drink from a standing still water dish, but they will lap up droplets of water off plants so the misting and a drip system also serves as a water source. Position a drip system so the water droplets cascade over the plants in the enclosure, a constant flowing water fountain is also recommended
Grooming	These guys will shed on their own. Make sure to humidify the enclosure more than normal when the shed starts. This will ensure a clean full shed. Avoid handling at this time as well.
Oral and Foot Care	Make sure to use a cage that has wide enough mesh to where the chameleons feed and claws will not get stuck.
Proper Handling	Chameleons have extremely fragile joints, and should be handled with extreme care and delicacy. Never attempt to pull the chameleons from a branch. Always let them climb onto your hand first. If pulled too quickly or forcefully you can dislocate their ankles, leading to other health injuries and potentially death.
Habitat Maintenance	The enclosure should be cleaned out monthly, use a low grade antibacterial disinfectant such as white vinegar and hot water. Reptiles are very sensitive to harsh chemicals.
Health Concerns	These guys are sometimes born with parasites. In the wild their life expectancy is around a year, due to all the parasitic infections. Also look out for metabolic bone disease, from lack of calcium. These guys can be picky eaters also so it's important to monitor their food intake. Very fragile joints as mentioned before, keep handling to a minimum. Dislocating joints is very common amongst chameleons; precautions should be used when handling them. Sprung tongues are another common injury with these guys. This happens when your chameleons tongue springs out to grab an insect. Sometimes the tongue hits another part of the cage or branch. This confuses the chameleons because they think they struck for food, but the tongue cannot retract. There's a little nerve at the end of the tongue that acts like a vacuum. The chameleons can choose to let go, but since there's food they don't want too. If this happens contact your local exotic vet as soon as possible. This may lead to a life of hand feeding. Avoid close hand feedings, this can cause the muscles in the tongue to weaken from lack of extension.