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Dietary Recommendations for Green Iguanas

Green Iguanas are herbivorous (plant eating) and, in the wild, feed almost entirely on the leaves of various vines and trees. They do not have gizzards like birds and, therefore, do not require grit in the diet. Similarly they are not insectivorous at any time in their lives; they are herbivorous from birth (although the occasional insect may be taken opportunistically).

In captivity, Green Iguanas should be fed a mixture of vegetables and fruits, with some protein supplementation. Food should be prepared fresh daily and water should be available at all times. All plant material should be washed, chopped, mixed and served at room temperature or slightly warmer. Discard any uneaten food after a few hours. Recommended diets, ingredients, amounts, and schedules are listed below.

Hatchlings up to 14 inches in length:

85% plant matter 15% animal protein. Plant material to be finely chopped or shredded. Feed twice daily or have food continuously available.

Juveniles up to 2.5 years of age or 14 inches to 3 feet in length:

90% plant material, 10% animal protein. Plant material to be chopped fines to medium or shredded. Feed once daily.

Adults over 2.5 years of age or over 3 feet in length:

95% plant material, 5% animal protein. Plant material to be chopped coarsely. Feed once daily.

Recommended diet ingredients:

Calcium rich vegetables: should comprise 30-40% of diet, offer two or more items per feeding. Examples: Turnip greens, mustard greens, beet greens, kale, collards, bok choy, Swiss chard, dandelions, parsley, romaine, escarole, spinach, alfalfa pellets. Other vegetables: should comprise 30-40% of diet, feed a variety weekly.

EXAMPLES: Thawed frozen mixed vegetables, squash, zucchini, sweet potatoes, bell pepper, broccoli, peas, beans, okra, grated carrot, bean sprouts. Grain and Fiber can comprise up to 20% of diet. Such as whole grain breads and natural bran cereals. Fruits, no more than 15% of diet. Such as Figs, Papaya, melon, apple, peaches, plums, strawberries, tomatoes, banana (with skin), grapes, kiwi.

ANIMAL PROTEIN SOURCES: 5% of adult diet, 10% of juvenile diet, 15% of hatchling diets.

EXAMPLES: Insects such as crickets, mealworms, king mealworms. Commercial Pelted Diets: premium lowfat dog foods (Iams/Eukanuba or Science Diet), primate diets (Monkey Chow, Monkey Biscuit), or trout chow can be soaked in water and offered with the plant material. Note that all these products have high levels of vitamin D and, therefore, should be used sparingly and with caution. Other protein sources: tofu, hard-boiled egg. However, calcium and the fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) can be oversupplemented, to the lizards detriment, as well as undersupplemented. The best way to avoid the perils of oversupplementation is to feed a variety of natural sources of calcium and the fat soluble vitamins. Modest amounts of vitamin/mineral supplementation are then used to balance out the diet. Choose supplements with Vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 is the form of Vitamin D used by reptiles, and this is a better source than Vitamin D2. To avoid additive toxicity, avoid mineral supplements which contain vitamin A and D3. For calcium supplementation, select powdered calcium carbonate or calcium gluconate, or cuttlebone shavings. Mix two parts vitamin supplement with one part mineral supplement and feed as follows: For hatchlings and juveniles: one small pinch per feeding. For adult males: one full pinch per two pounds body weight, twice weekly. Adult females: one full pinch of feeding from December until egg laying.