



## **CARE SHEET FOR:**

- **Panther Chameleons**  
*(Furcifer Paradalis)*

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Congratulations on your new Panther Chameleon. This care sheet will help guide you through some basic care and husbandry required for panther chameleons. We know you want to provide your chameleon with the best care possible, so please read though the following items carefully. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **Background**

Panther Chameleons are beautiful arboreal (tree dwelling) reptiles, that have a vast array of different colors, and patterns! This care sheet is here for you to use as guidance at proper husbandry and care for your Panther Chameleon! These are only guidelines based off of what our experience has taught us. Knowledge is Power! The more you read and understand about the chameleon, the better care you can provide for them! We encourage you to become a member on the chameleon forums, so you can learn various other techniques and care tips from other experienced keepers as well!



Panther chameleons are capable of displaying a wide variety of color patterns. These different patterns are referred to as locales which are usually named according to the nearest town where the chameleon originates. Some of the major locales are the Nosy Be, Nosy Faly, Nosy Mitsio, Ambanja, Ambilobe, Ankaramy, Sambava, and Tamatave. Additional locales exist but are not a prevalent in the captive bred chameleon world. No matter the locale, all panther chameleons are cared for the same way.



### **Enclosures:**

We recommend the following cages for our Panther Chameleons specific to their size and age. All chameleons develop at different rates so these are only approximate timeframes for each cage.

Starter Series: Dimensions: 22" x 14" x 24", Recommended Age: 3 – 8 Months

Lifetime Series: Dimensions: 22" x 14" x 24", Recommended Age: 3 Months - Adult

Fortress Series: Dimensions: 22" x 14" x 24", Recommended Age: 6 Months - Adult

## Cage Setups:

Vines & Branches: Be sure to set up your cage with plenty of branches as well as vines to allow for your chameleon to travel all over the cage without having to climb on the screen. Horizontal branches can be used for basking as well as just hanging out on. Hanging vines and over vertical vines are great for climbing from branch to branch.



Substrates: Substrate for the bottom of a chameleon's cage is never recommended. The cage bottom must be kept clean and free of debris. We recommend cleaning the bottom of their cages every day. Simply pull out the removable bottom and wipe the surface clean with a moist paper towel.



Plants: We recommend a combination of both live and artificial plants in your chameleon's cage. You want to provide enough hiding and shade areas for your chameleon to feel safe and secure in his/her cage. Not all live plants are safe for your chameleon, so be sure to check if your plant is safe before placing it in their cage. Some recommended ones are Pothos, Ficus, Hibiscus, and Scheffleras. Be sure to properly clean all live plants prior to placing them in the cage. This can be accomplished by inverting the plant into a bucket of soapy water and hand wash all leaves. Allow it to soak in the bucket for a few minutes, rinse off with clean water and repeat. Finally, repot the plant with new soil that does not contain any fertilizer or additives.

## Lighting:

The question you need to ask is what provides the BEST light for your chameleon? The one and only goal is to create lighting that is as close to natural sunlight as possible, the broader the spectrum of light, the better it is for any living animal.

Proper lighting is essential for the health of your chameleon! Both UVB lighting and Heat Basking Lighting is required for all panther chameleons.



UVB Lighting: We recommend a Double HO T5 Light Fixture with (1) 6.5k bulb and (1) 6% Arcadia UVB Bulb.

We use Arcadia UVB bulbs as they are the best quality UVB bulb on the market with the longest usage life! Chameleons NEED UVB to synthesize Vitamin D in the skin and to facilitate absorption of dietary calcium. UV lighting helps to elevate a chameleon's mood, energy level and appetite. Without Adequate UVB lighting, your chameleon will develop life threatening health issues.

A lot of people ask, "Isn't a 6500k light just for plant growth?" The answer is NO! An added bulb with a 6500k in it will help to simulate natural circadian rhythms, as well as broaden the light spectrum. Circadian rhythm is a 24 hour cycle in the physiological process of living beings. Circadian rhythms can be modulated by external cues such as sunlight and temperature. Circadian rhythms are important in determining the sleeping and feeding patterns of all animals. Basically it helps, to combat reptile depression (no I'm not kidding). Similar to "seasonal affective disorder" that most captive reptiles have from being poorly lit.





**Basking Lighting:** We recommend a dome light fixture with clamp. Any incandescent light bulb will work as it is strictly for heat generation. We found a 50W bulb to produce the correct temperatures for our chameleons.

It is recommended that you put your lights on a timer and have them on 12 hours on and off 12 hours. No light (not even, red or blue light) should be used at night. Chameleons can still see red and blue light and it will keep them awake at night. Complete darkness is necessary for proper sleeping.

The basking light should be clipped on the corner of the cage to provide a temperature gradient for the reptile. If placed in the middle, the heat is then evenly dispersed through the cage and does not create the proper gradients.

### **Temperature:**

Temperature for basking should be 83-84F for juveniles (3-6 months) and 85-89F for adults. A horizontal branch should be placed approximately 6 inches under the light so the temperature is adequate. Please do not lay the dome on the screen of the cage! If they decide to climb on the top of the screen they could get severely burned. Use the clamp to attach the light to the top of the cage so the dome sits a few inches away from the screen. An extremely useful test we recommend is to place your hand inside the cage as close to the light as your chameleon could get. If you can hold your hand there for a minute without having to move it due to the heat, the temperature is most likely safe for your chameleon. If your hand feels hot and you must move it away then the temperature is too high and it could cause a burn on your chameleon if they bask for too long.

Ambient temperatures for the cage during the day should be around 72-76F.

A nighttime temperature drop is fine, even down into the mid 60's, if it gets colder than that a ceramic heater is recommended for the winter months.



## Humidity

Proper Humidity is essential for the wellbeing of your chameleon as well. Ranges of 50-70% is recommended for Panther Chameleons. Depending on where you are from, it may be hard to keep the humidity up in the screen enclosure. Frequent misting's are recommended to boost humidity levels as well as allowing extra opportunities for your Chameleon to drink. You can either hand mist your cage a few times a day (3-4 minimum), or you can get an automated misting system that will mist your cage multiple times throughout the day. We strongly recommend an automated misting system, as you do not have to schedule your day around misting the cage. If you are having trouble keeping the humidity up, you can purchase a room humidifier to keep the moisture level up in the room where your chameleon is housed. Live plants also allow for greater humidity. We recommend all chameleons be treated to live plants in their enclosure such as Umbrella Plants, Ficus, Hibiscus and Pothos to name a few.

## Water Source

Chameleons do NOT recognize standing water, as a water source. So providing a bowl with water in it, is NOT recommend. Adequate Misting's and using a dripper are essential for proper hydration of your chameleon. When using a dripper, allow it to fall onto a leaf that will create a splash effect. The chameleon only recognizes water droplets as a water source, and this will catch your chameleon's eye. We recommend starting the dripper every morning after the initial misting to allow them a good 30-60 minutes to drink as much water as necessary. Do not let the dripper run at night as the cage needs to dry out prior to your chameleon going to sleep for the night.

At a minimum, spray down your enclosure within an hour after lights on to give them plenty of time to drink in the morning. Provide another misting in the early afternoon as well as one approximately an hour before lights out, giving ample time for the cage to dry out before night.

## Feeding

Some excellent feeder insects include crickets, silkworms, hornworms, dubia roach, and superworms. Other feeders such as butterworms, waxworms and mealworms are high in fat and harder to digest so they should only be fed a treats and not as a main source of food. Please note that stinkbugs and fireflies should never be fed to your chameleon.

Staple Feeders: Chameleons require a variety of food but a main staple food should be provided. We recommend crickets as they are easily obtained. Below is an outline for feeding:

Age: 3-6 months, 12-15 small crickets a day\*

Age: 6-12 months 10-12 medium crickets a day\*

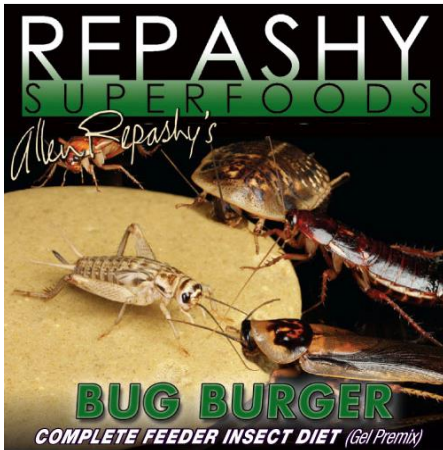
Age: >12 months 8-10 large crickets every other day\*\*



\* These are only guidelines for feeding. When they are younger and growing up fast, they may be eating more than 15 crickets a day. Feel free to give them as much food as they will eat in a day.

\*\* Feeding is cut back on adult males once they reach over 12 months in age. By feeding every other day this will help prevent them from being overweight. Same goes for females unless they are actively breeding in which case their diet is not reduced.

Feed early in the day so they have time to bask and digest their food properly.



### Gut Loading

All feeders, like crickets and roaches must be gut loaded with nutritious foods before feeding your chameleon. Inadequate diet can lead to severe health problems. We use Resphasy "Bug Burger" to gutload our feeder insects. It is packed full with all the valuable nutrition your feeders need to survive and to give to your chameleon. It also acts as both a food and a water source for your feeders so there is no need to supply them with dry food and water anymore.

### Supplementation

Calcium and other vitamins are essential for the longevity of your chameleon. Feeder insects should be lightly dusted with powdered supplements before being feed.

We use Resphasy Calcium Plus "All in One" on every feeding! We see amazing results with this method.

There are other methods and opinions for supplementing but we found ours to work the best with our setups and basic husbandry.

### Handling

We highly recommend giving your new chameleons 2-3 weeks of space prior to handling them. This gives them plenty of time to settle in and feel safe and comfortable in their new cage and with their new surroundings.



After these few weeks, you can start handling them for short periods of time (1-2 minutes) to start getting them use to your presence and hopefully teach them to understand you are not there to harm them. As they become older and become more comfortable with you, you can increase the time frame for which they are out and about with you.

A bonding experience that seems to help with all chameleons accepting you is hand feeding. Every chameleon is different and some with take to being handled better than others but for the stubborn ones, we find that the key to their heart is usually tasty insects.

Thank you again from the whole Canvas Chameleons family.

