



Green Anole Care Sheet

About

A delightful small lizard, the green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) makes a popular choice for an easy care reptile pet. They're the kind of pet that will entertain you with their busy antics during daylight and their beautiful color is lovely to behold.

Odds are, you will probably see this type of lizard in your garden. They are very common, and they enjoy sitting on branches of large, leafy plants.

A green anole has a life expectancy between 4 to 8 years and while that's a daily commitment for the upcoming years, they are reasonably easy to care for provided you get the set-up correct (which requires a bit of expenditure). This article explains the ins and outs of green anole care including shelter, food and keeping them happy in their artificial environment.

The green anole is normally bright green, but it can change its color to brownish-green or dark brown in seconds. It is sometimes called the American chameleon because it can change color, but it is not a true chameleon. The green anole changes color because of changes in temperature, humidity, health and mood, not to blend into its background. Males have a pink or red throat fan or dewlap.

Care

Anoles are insectivores and the size of insects they'll eat ranges from small to medium. Anoles need a minimum of twice weekly feeding and preferably every 2 to 3 days, or ask for advice from your vet. If you have more than one anole, it is vital that you keep an eye to see that each anole gets several insects every feeding. The food must be live – canned foods will not be eaten since it is lifeless and won't compete with your anole.

- Feed crickets. One meal anoles enjoy is cricket; buy the smallest cricket offered, and if there is only "one size" at a pet store, go to a different one. Dust the crickets with a supplement powder at each feeding to help ensure the anoles get enough calcium and vitamins (anoles missing the key nutrients can get metabolic bone disease (MBD) and die). If you keep crickets around in bulk, "gut-load" them by feeding them a vitamin rich cricket food prior to feeding them to your lizards. This way, all of the nutritious food your crickets just ate will then, in turn, be passed on to your anole. Equally, if your crickets are starved, your anole soon will be too. Baby anoles (should you be breeding them) require micro crickets or tiny fruit flies.

- Occasional fast prey like small cockroaches or flies will give your lizards some much needed exercise.
- Anoles may also eat wax worms, fruit flies, small worms, canned crickets, small spiders, or earthworms.
- Avoid feeding anoles with mealworms. These pass through them undigested, wasting energy in eating and not getting any energy from the food.
- Anoles prefer to get their water in the form of droplets off plants. As such, daily misting is an essential activity in the vivarium. Mist both the anoles and the plants for 10 seconds 2 to 3 times a day. If you can't remember to do this or don't want to, have an automated mister or drip system installed.

A typical container will be a tall vivarium or a tank. Inside the vivarium, be sure to supply plenty of plants (either real or artificial, or a mixture of both) and basking items such as branches or smooth rocks.

- For a community consisting of one male and four females (known as a "harem"), the size of the container should be approximately 36 x 24 x 12 inches or 90 x 60 x 30cm. The height of the container is important, to allow for climbing around.
- Fill the vivarium or tank evenly one or more inches or 2.5-5 centimeters with sterilized reptile bark big enough that it cannot fit in the anole's mouth. Never use unsterilized bark or floor covering you're not sure about; ask the pet store or your vet for advice if you're unsure.
- Always use a tank cover. Other pets (like cats) like to 'play' with anoles and this usually means death for an escaped anole.

Anoles need to be in a daily temperature range of approximately 75-86°F / 24-30°C. Use full spectrum lighting to ensure the healthy development of both anoles and the live plants. The nighttime temperature can drop to 68°F / 20°C but no lower.

- A fluorescent 40 watt bulb will create the right temperature during the day but must be turned off at night and replaced with a black light.
- Like people, anoles can fall asleep in the sun for longer than they intended to. While they like long days, you should still put a timer on their grow light so that it is on for

12 hours a day, so they can get 12 hours of darkness but there needs to be a black light on during the night as they will freeze if no warmth is added.

- High humidity levels are important too, achieved through regular misting and perhaps a dripper or a water feature. Also be sure to supply adequate fresh air.