



Introduction Guide To The Care Of Desert Horned Lizard

Scientific Name: *Phrynosoma plartyrhinos*

Life Span: Approximately 7-8 years in captivity

Size: approx 9-10cm

Appearance: This species of lizard has a distinctive flat body with a row of fringed scales down the side. They have one row of slightly enlarged scales on each side of the throat. Colours can vary and generally blend in with the surrounding soil, but usually they have a beige tan or reddish dorsum with contrasting wavy blotches of dark colour. They have two dark blotches on the neck that are very prominent and are bordered posteriorly by a light gray or white colour. They also have pointed scales on the dorsum (back) of the body. Juveniles are similar to adults but have shorter and less pronounced cranial spines. Desert horned lizards have horns that are longer than they are wider at the base which isn't true for their congener, the short tailed lizard.

Temperament and Handling: Desert Horned Dragons are generally a gentle species, but have been known to try and push their cranial spines into the hand while held. If provoked, they hiss and threaten to bite. When excited they puff themselves up with air, similar to the way a chuckwalla does, making themselves look bigger. If spotted near a bush they will dash into it to attempt to find cover from any potential threat. If threatened they have been known to squirt blood out of their eyes as far as five feet.

Housing: substrate/bedding ideal for a desert horned dragon is loamy earth with rock structures or Sand or grit, with plenty of places for them to hide and burrow is essential to a happy desert horned lizard, with a flat water bowl that is easily accessible. A 3ft min vivarium is required as although small these reptiles do like to explore and are quite active

Heating and Lighting: A comfortable temperature for these lizards is around 76-88 F. In addition to UV light these lizards also need a hotter basking spot of about 95F. You can use either a ceramic heat emitter or a reptile basking light for this. Heat rocks are not recommended as they can burn your animal.

Humidity and Hydration: 30-50%

Feeding: Desert Horned Toad Lizards are mainly insectivorous. They will feed on small crickets, fruit flies, mealworms, wax worms, and any other insect small enough for them to ingest. Ants are a favorite of this species. It is recommended that food be dusted with calcium to prevent bone softening and Nuttobal for added vitamins and supplements.

Please note that this is only an introductory guide based on our opinions and experience, we advise you to continually research and learn as much as possible from as many sources as you can, every animal is different and new care and information is always being developed and found 😊