



## Anole

*Anolis spp.*

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The green anole (*A. carolinensis*) is the most common pet species and the only species native to the US, though several others have become invasive species in Florida. Knight anoles (*A. equestris*) should not be housed with any anoles smaller than themselves as they will happily eat them! Many anoles are wild caught. Anoles are very quick and easily stressed lizards that can sometimes be difficult to handle. Anoles should never be picked up or grabbed by their tail as it can come off in a defense mechanism known as autotomy. The tail can grow back to an extent, but will not be quite the same color, size or texture it was before. Captive bred anoles are easier to tame. Anoles can change color; when stressed a green anole may turn brown. Anoles can live about 6 years. Males generally grow to be about 8 inches in length and females 5 or 6 inches.

**Health care:** Anoles can be very good at hiding illness. We recommend annual exams, to make sure your pet is healthy! Green anoles that turn brown often are being over stressed by either a disease or something in their environment. Contact your veterinarian if this happens. They may turn green again at night, when they are sleeping and then back to brown when they wake up. Anoles with significant skin folds or sunken eyes are dehydrated. If they are living at the correct humidity or have been for more than 24 hr, contact your veterinarian. Common problems are intestinal parasites, anorexia, and intestinal obstruction. Remember with any disease processes, the sooner we see the animal, the more successful we are at treating it!

**Husbandry concerns:** Do not house with species from other countries, to prevent exposure to new diseases. Excessive handling while they are new should be avoided. Anoles can be housed singly, in groups of females or one male with 2 or more females. Do not house more than one male together as they will fight. Terrariums that are taller than they are wide are preferred as anoles are arboreal (tree dwelling). The minimum tank size for 2 anoles is a 10 gallon. A tall 20 gallon (48 x 13 x 20 inches) is required for 3-4 anoles. Use newspaper, large rocks or artificial turf as a substrate on the bottom of the cage. Provide lots of items to climb on! Anoles would rather sit in tangles of leaves high up than in caves on the ground. Non-toxic live plants, like bromeliads can be great and help keep up humidity. A ceramic heat lamp should provide a focal basking spot of 85-90°F, while the rest of the cage should have a gradient down to the 70's°F. At night, the cage can cool down to 65-75°F. Do not allow contact with the lamp. Do not use hot rocks or pads as they can easily cause thermal burns! At night, make sure lights

**More on the back!**

are off. Use a digital thermometer for temperature measurement and measure at the level where the skink lives. A UV light is necessary, and should provide 12 hours of light with at least 5% UVB, not being screened by plastic/glass/mesh, and within 14 inches of the skink. If the light is going to pass through the mesh top of a cage, it should be at least 9% UVB, as 40% of UVB is lost passing through the mesh. In the wild, anoles drink water droplets off of leaves. Some may not figure out how to use a water dish. Use either a water drip system or ice cubes on a mesh cage top and allow them to melt into a water dish on leaves with a water dish below them. This may also help anoles learn to use a water dish as the water splashing attracts their attention. Be sure that the water dish is shallow and anoles can climb out of it if they fall in to prevent drowning! Humidity should be maintained at 60-70% by misting multiple times per day or using a mister system.

**Diet:** Anoles are insectivores. Feed them crickets and other small insects. Be sure any wild caught insects are pesticide free! Do not feed fireflies! They are poisonous! Captive-raised insects need to be fed either a gut-loading diet available at the pet-store, or a special diet recommended by your veterinarian. These insects should be misted in a zip-loc bag, then shake-and-baked with a calcium-only powder coating before feeding to the anole (we recommend using Tums crushed into a powder: avoid mixes with vitamins, especially vitamin D or phosphorus). Feed anoles daily as much as they are interested in eating. If uneaten insects are left in the cage, provide food for them so they do not chew on the anoles!

**Sexing:** Males are larger and have a dewlap (throat fan), which they use in displays for females or rival males. Females and juveniles of both sexes have a white stripe down their back. During the breeding season, dominant males may develop dark spots just behind their eyes.

