

# East Bay Vivarium

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## Leopard Gecko Care Sheet

Leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*) come from the semi-arid desert regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. This is the type of environment you should try to recreate.

### **Habitat:**

**Temperature:** Establish a range of temperature from 80 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit. One end of the cage should be cool (75 – 80° F) and the other end hot (90 – 95° F). It is important to offer your gecko a choice of conditions. Always measure the temperature at the floor of the cage, and not the cage wall. Generally, treat the cold side as an absolute goal, and the hot side as a minimum goal.

**Bedding:** Sand can work well for leopard geckos. We suggest Vita-Sand to prevent impaction. Repti-sand is another, dye-less, alternative. Other substrates can include pine shavings or hardwood chips.

Avoid cedar and other “aromatic” woods – they are poisonous to your animal.

**Water:** Provide a shallow dish with fresh water available at all times, or mist the sides of the tank twice per day.

**Hide Box:** Provide a dark place for your gecko to hide in on the warm side of the cage. Broken pottery works well, as well as other available products. Damp moss or shavings may be placed in the box to aid in shedding.

**Tank Size:** 10 gallon tanks can house 1–3 geckos, provided only one is male.

### **Feeding:**

**Diet:** A leopard gecko’s diet consists primarily of live insects. Feed 3–7 crickets, waxworms, or king mealworms three times a week for an adult. For a juvenile, feed 5–10 crickets, waxworms, or mealworms daily. Diet can be supplemented with pureed fruit. Adults can take pinky mice once a week in addition to the insects. Variety is important!

**Vitamins:** Generously dust all insect foods with a 50/50 mixture of multivitamins (such as “Herptivite”) and calcium with D<sub>3</sub>. Without these, your animal may develop vitamin and calcium deficiencies that can prove fatal.

## Maintenance:

**Shedding:** It is important that your gecko shed his/her skin completely, especially the skin on the fingers and toes. Incomplete sheds over a period of time can lead to the loss of these digits. Mist your baby gecko's cage on the hot side heavily just prior to shedding to keep the skin supple. After the shed, examine the gecko to see if all the skin was removed. If not, soak your gecko in a shallow (ankle-depth) bath of tepid water (less than 80° F) for 20-30 minutes, then gently peel away any unshed skin by hand.

**Cleaning:** Spot clean individual messes as they occur and replace with fresh bedding. Clean the entire cage as needed.

**Handling:** Frequent handling is the best way to allow your gecko to feel comfortable under human care. It's OK to handle the animal for a short period every day; this will go a long way in producing a tame pet.

**Any Questions? Don't hesitate to contact us!**

Photo from <http://flic.kr/p/3o78Sp>

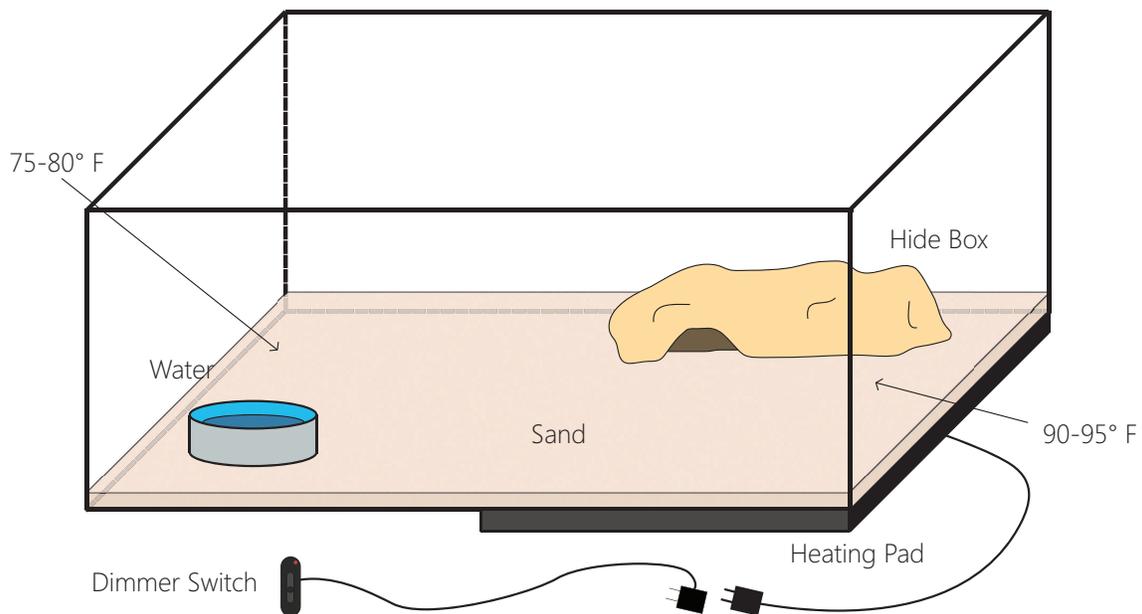


FIGURE 1. Sample Tank. Be sure to add a heating lamp to the hot end of the cage to supplement the heat if you can't achieve the desired hot side temperature. If you use a thermostat, be sure to place the probe on the cold side of the cage, set for the cold side temperature.