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### **Dietary Recommendations for Green Iguanas**

Green Iguanas are herbivorous (plant eaters) and feed almost entirely on the leaves of various vines and trees in the wild. They do not have gizzards like birds and do not require grit in the diet. Similarly, they are not insectivorous at any time in their lives; they are herbivorous from birth (although the occasional insect may be taken opportunistically).

In captivity, Green Iguanas should be fed a mixture of vegetables and fruits, with some protein supplementation. Food should be prepared fresh daily and water should be available at all times. All plant material should be washed, chopped, mixed, and served at room temperature or slightly warmer. Discard any uneaten food after a few hours. Recommended diets, ingredients, amounts, and schedules are listed below.

Hatchlings up to 14 inches in length:

85% plant matter & 15% animal protein. Plant material needs to be finely chopped or shredded. Feed twice daily or have food continuously available.

Juveniles up to 2.5 years of age or 14 inches to 3 feet in length:

90% plant material & 10% animal protein. Plant material needs to be chopped fines to medium or shredded. Feed once daily.

Adults over 2.5 years of age or over 3 feet in length:

95% plant material & 5% animal protein. Plant material needs to be chopped coarsely. Feed once daily.

#### **Recommended diet ingredients:**

Calcium rich vegetables: should comprise 30-40% of diets; offer two or more items per feeding. Examples: Turnip greens, mustard greens, beet greens, kale, collards, bok choy, Swiss chard, dandelions, parsley, romaine, escarole, spinach, alfalfa pellets. Other vegetables: should comprise 30-40% of diet, feed a variety weekly.

Examples:

Thawed frozen mixed vegetables, squash, zucchini, sweet potatoes, bell pepper, broccoli, peas, beans, okra, grated carrot, bean sprouts. Grain and fiber such as whole grain breads and natural bran cereals can comprise up to 20% of diet. Fruits should be no more than



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15% of diet. These include figs, papaya, melon, apple, peaches, plums, strawberries, tomatoes, banana (with skin), grapes, and kiwi.

ANIMAL PROTIEN SOURCES: 5% of adult diet, 10% of juvenile diet, 15% of hatchling diets

Examples:

Insects such as crickets, mealworms, king mealworms

Commercial Pelted Diets: premium low-fat dog foods (Iams/Eukanuba or Science Diet)

Primate diets (Monkey Chow, Monkey Biscuit)

Trout chow soaked in water and offered with the plant material

Note that all these products have high levels of vitamin D and, therefore, should be used sparingly and with caution

Other protein sources: tofu, hard-boiled egg

Calcium and the fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) can be oversupplemented, to the lizard's detriment, as well as undersupplemented. The best way to avoid the perils of oversupplementation is to feed a variety of natural sources of calcium and the fat-soluble vitamins. Modest amounts of vitamin/mineral supplementation are then used to balance out the diet. Choose supplements with Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is the form of Vitamin D used by reptiles, and this is a better source than Vitamin D<sub>2</sub>. To avoid additive toxicity, avoid mineral supplements, which contain vitamin A and D<sub>3</sub>. For calcium supplementation, select powdered calcium carbonate or calcium gluconate, or cuttlebone shavings. Mix two parts vitamin supplement with one part mineral supplement and feed as follows: for hatchlings and juveniles - one small pinch per feeding. For adult males - one full pinch per two pounds body weight, twice weekly. Adult females - one full pinch of feeding from December until egg laying.