



**Common Name: Painted dragon,**

Scientific Name: *Ctenophorus pictus*

**Biology and behaviour**

Painted Dragons are diurnal (day-active) and terrestrial (ground-dwelling), spending their days basking on logs, stones and termite mounds. Painted Dragons are ectotherms and therefore rely on their environment to regulate their body temperature. Without adequate body heat these lizards cannot digest their food. Males are territorial and will fight for dominance. Adult male Central Netted Dragons measure around 7cm from snout to tail. Captive lizards are expected to live around five years; however there are reports of some living over seven years of age.

**Requirements**

You require a basic wildlife licence issued by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

**Housing**

Adults should be kept in at least a 60cm long terrarium, cage decorations should include suitable hiding places and logs. Cage temperatures should be kept around 30-32 degrees with a cool end of around 25 degrees the basking spot (under the heat source) should be around 45 degrees. A 10.0 reptile UV globe should be provided and should be on for about 8 hours a day as this helps with the absorption of calcium and the formation of bone structure. Bark, commercially cleaned sand, synthetic grass, newspaper or butchers paper are all good clean substrates.

**Feeding**

Painted Dragons wait for insects to pass before striking; often leaving an elevated basking spot to feed on a passing insect before returning to bask. It is important to provide a safe and healthy diet for your dragon so it achieves optimum health. Only use live insects that have not been exposed to insecticides or chemicals. Painted dragons should be fed on a variety of insects such as crickets, cockroaches and mealworms (only as adults) supplemented with calcium and vitamin powders occasionally. Feed adult dragons about 3 times a week and allow them to eat about 6-7 insects per feed. It is often suggested to feed small reptiles like Painted Dragons more often, even up to five times a week. This is not recommended and can result in an overweight dragon with health problems like a fatty liver. However, growing juveniles need to be fed up to five times a week.

**Water**

Ensure water bowls are cleaned regularly. Also make sure that fresh water is available constantly.

**Handling**

Painted dragons can be shy animals but in time some individuals adjust to handling. Most are not aggressive and do not bite. As juveniles they are very fragile and you must be gentle while handling.