

Common Name: Tokay gecko	Scientific Name: <i>Gecko gecko</i>
Class: Reptilia Order: Squamata Family: Gekkonidae	Feeding Type: Carnivore Statistics: Length: 5 to 14 inches Weight: 30 to 50 g

DESCRIPTION: Tokay geckos have thin skin with small bumps or scales. Skin color is usually gray or brown, but can turn a light shade of blue, and bumps are generally orange to rust in color. A change in skin color may be brought on by a mating display or for camouflage. The body is plump, with large eyes and head.

RANGE: India and Southeast Asia

HABITAT: Generally, tokay geckos are found in parched deserts, but they can survive in a variety of climates.

ADAPTATIONS: One adaptation is the dilation of the pupils in night-active geckos. The pupils will enlarge at night and shrink to slits during the day.

The best-known adaptation is probably the gecko's ability to lose its tail in situations of danger. The gecko's tail has areas of weakness in the vertebrae that are surrounded by connective muscles and tissues. A gecko will contract the muscles in front of the weak area to split a vertebra and shed the part of its tail held by an attacker.

Splitting of the vertebrae is called intravertebral autonomy. A more primitive method of tail loss involves the tail's breaking between the vertebrae (intervertebral autonomy). Tails lost in this way are less likely to regrow. Geckos can live up to three months without food, but seldom last for more than 50 days without tails.

Note: Sometimes a gecko will grow a tail where a previous tail only partially broke off, thus giving the gecko two or three tails!

Tokay geckos have broad toes covered with flaps of skin containing thousands of tiny bristles. Each bristle tip is a rounded spatula, so that the gecko can grip tiny niches or smooth surfaces such as a windowpane, which aids in finding food.

The tokay gecko's mouth is dark black outlined in pink along the inside of the lip. It will open its mouth and hiss, showing the black skin to frighten off predators. A tokay gecko has a strong and painful bite even though it has small, modified teeth.

REPRODUCTION/GROWTH: The tokay gecko's mating season is between March and May. Tokay was named for the courtship call, "to-kay, to-kay." Geckos usually lay two eggs per clutch and may have several clutches during the breeding season. The eggs are soft at first with a sticky coating so they can be stuck inside cracks, under bark, or on stones, and will generally harden after being attached. The eggs incubate six to ten weeks. Male geckos with regrown tails or no tails are considered less desirable by female geckos.

LONGEVITY: Up to 20 years

PREY/PREDATOR: Prey to the pet trade and possibly larger lizards or carnivores
Predator to insects and other small animals

Note: A gecko only pounces on an insect if it moves.

DIET:

WILD: Mainly insects and some fruits

SZ: Crickets and mealworms

STATUS: Geckos are widespread and adaptable, but are probably affected by the popularity of the pet trade.

SPECIAL NOTES: Tokay geckos have nonfunctional eyelids, so will lick the eyes to keep them moist. A gecko can lose its tail two or three times, depending on the type of detachment, before it cannot grow a replacement.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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