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WANGARATTA

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Central Netted Dragons (*Ctenophorus Nuchalis*).

INTRODUCTION:

These small and cute dragons are becoming one of the more popular dragons to keep these days; both their size and temperament are one of the main reasons for this. Adult dragons only reach a size of 26-28cm in length, with snout to vent roughly 10cm and the rest is tail. They are usually flighty as juveniles but settle down and become more relaxed when older with regular handling. These characters are sun lovers and their natural habitat ranges from the Western Australian coast to Western New South Wales and Queensland. Hot, sandy environment is what these guys love, they're real desert dwellers. Netted Dragons soak up the sun but retreat to their cool burrows during the night or through the hotter parts of the day.

These dragons got their name netted from their net like pattern throughout their body, often red brick colour to greys and browns.

Like most dragons males grow larger than females and can be recognised from their more rounded and larger head compared to body size. If keeping more than one dragon one male to three females is best as males are more likely to fight than females.



Sub Adult Central Netted Dragon

HOUSING:

These guys love to dig so substrate choice is an important factor when it comes to housing these lizards, closer to their real habitat the better. Sand is the preferred substrate, with a light misting every so often (2-3 days) to add a bit of moisture allowing them to dig to their hearts content, but be aware they can be messy. Hide areas are essential for them to hide and sleep as most dragons need a quick escape if they feel scared or threatened. Driftwood or a hide rock is ideal.



Other alternatives are newspaper or gravel which makes regular maintenance much easier but does not show off your dragons as much... and I'm sure any dragon would prefer their natural environment rather than newspaper.

A floor space of 80cm*40cm would comfortably house a trio of Central Netted Dragons, allow areas to climb, run and dig. A wooden or glass enclosure with secure lid is ideal; depending on climate of your region wooden enclosures are recommended for cooler areas as glass can be difficult to maintain a constant temperature.

LIGHT/HEAT:

UV light is a must for any dragon other wise they could grow with bone deformities, replacement of the UV light every six months is recommended as they lose their strength and output. As said earlier they are sun lovers and love to bask so a basking light for them is great, though there is another option. Ceramic heat lamps allow it to remain dark while they are active through the night. A gradient temperature of about 28-30 degrees with a hot spot of around 35-37 degrees is ideal for basking.

DIET:

Central Netteds eat a lot of plant life and small insects. All live food such as crickets or woodies which can be purchased from you local pet store should be coated with calcium and vitamin powder. But remember if you are feeding your dragon greens from your garden such as dandelions or lettuce, ensure they haven't been sprayed with any insecticides as it could be fatal. Provide clean water for them on a regular basis, if they don't drink from their water bowl soak their plant matter in water to ensure they are getting enough moisture.

**BREEDING:**

Female dragons may lay up to three clutches in one season, spring to summer is when they will breed and lay up to six eggs. They will become restless pre-lay and will be searching for the right spot to lay her eggs, provide a moist sandy area for her. Eggs take usually about eight weeks before hatching; hatchlings should NOT be kept with adult dragons as it will result in certain death. Incubation should be at a stable 30 degrees.

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