



# CONTEMPORARY NATURALISTIC CHAMELEON CAGING

## GOLDEN PRINCIPLE

The chameleon cage is a model of the natural living space of the chameleon, simulating and imitating it to the highest extent possible in its vital factors and eliminating lethal ones, with the use of affordable and meaningful contemporary resources.

### MAGICAL FORMULA

:

### CONTEMPORARY NATURALISTIC CHAMELEON CAGING

=

S&S + S&I + E&G

M&A + E&T

#### S&S

#### SIZE AND SPACE

##### MAIN RULE

**Minimal cage size US:** 90 x 90 x 45 cm (36 x 36 x 18 in) or 120 x 60 x 60 cm (46 x 23 x 23 in) for all commonly kept species due to availability in trade (better to make a custom-made cage; even while keeping smaller species, do not take smaller sizes). The maximal height does not need to exceed 120 cm (46 in / 4ft), as there are no light sources available to fully and correctly illuminate bigger distances from the light source.

**Minimal cage size DE:** 4 HBL x 2,5 HBL x 4 HBL (width x depth x height, where HBL is Head and Body Length).

#### S&I

#### STRUCTURE AND INTERIEUR

##### Natural branches and living plants:

It is usually not realistic to use same trees and bushes as in the wild in the cage. Therefore, the structure of the cage should simulate the natural conditions in combining natural branches and potted living safe plants.

**Bottom:** use either nothing (no sand, soil, coconut soil, moss, woodcuts, pellets - all are dangerous: if swallowed, it causes often lethal impaction or increases humidity too high and causes mold or too high humidity at daytime) or use fine sand (or sand/soil) mixture that is pressed strongly at the bottom and firm or make the bottom bioactive/natural.

#### E&G

#### ENVIRONMENT AND GRADIENTS

##### ENVIRONMENT

**Light:** provide natural sun in outdoor or simulate it meaningfully in indoor cages with the three light spectrums - UV, Visible, IR using correct artificial light sources; switch off all lights at night.

**Temperature:** never overheat, simulate vital temperature conditions from homecountry and specific area/biotope/microbiotope in three main aspects: daytime and nighttime ambient temperature and basking spot using AC of the room and adjust with relevant light sources - refer to specific care sheets, always provide a significant nighttime drop.

**Humidity:** never expose to too high humidity at high temperatures, simulate vital temperature conditions from homecountry and specific area/biotope/microbiotope - refer to specific care sheets; use a meaningful combination of fogging, misting, raining and dripping and avoid fountains, bowls and waterfalls. Care for draining the cages if excessive water is used. Best use distilled or demineralized RO water. High humidity and fog is to be limited to nighttime and low temperatures only.

**Air Movement/Exchange:** care for air exchange using ventilation mesh walls at minimum at one side and whole ceiling and facilitate air movement using chimney effect or ventilators in the space or on the cage).

##### GRADIENTS

**Spatial Gradients:** Care for gradients in all parameters let the chameleon choose and regulate, simulating spatial elements of its microbiotope.

**Circadian Gradients:** Provide a significant difference in all environmental factors between day and night, simulate smoothly and not abruptly their changes during the course of the day.

**Seasonal Gradients:** Simulate the significant differences between seasons, allow pertinent species to brumate and follow their natural yearly cycles for rest, wellness and initiating of breeding.

**Variability:** Consider that all environmental factors undergo a more or less expressed variability which is wise to be simulated also.

#### M&A

#### MEASUREMENT AND ADJUSTMENT

Never guess but measure precisely the temperature, humidity and light intensity, adjust if needed to simulate the environment in the wild truly and meaningfully.

#### E&T

#### EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGIES

##### EQUIPMENT

- White light source
- Heat/IR source
- UV source
- Spray bottle/Mister/Misting system
- Fogger
- Ventilator (room, cage)
- RO device
- AC

##### INSTRUMENTS

- Thermometer
- Hygrometer
- Temperature gun
- Solar/UVI-meter
- Thermostat
- Hygrostat
- Timer
- Dimmer

##### VARIA

- Pincer
- Scissors
- Cups
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfection
- Supplementation
- First aid kit



Photo courtesy LeoŠ Lederer

