

# American Chameleon

## Green Anole



**Species:** *carolinensis*

**Genus:** *Anolis*

**Family:** Polychrotidae

**Order:** Squamata

**Class:** Reptilia

**Phylum:** Chordata

**Kingdom:** Animalia

### **Conditions for Customer Ownership**

We hold permits allowing us to transport these organisms. To access permit conditions, [click here](#).

**Never purchase living specimens without having a disposition strategy in place.**

A USDA permit is required to send anoles and all other vertebrates to Ohio. In order to protect our environment, never release a live laboratory organism into the wild.

### **Primary Hazard Considerations**

- As with many other reptiles, anoles can carry *Salmonella* bacteria, which can make people sick. To reduce the chance of infection, always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your anole, its food, or anything it has touched.
- An anole may bite if perceives a threat. Their bite is generally painless, but they can give you a startling pinch that is unlikely to break the skin. Do not grab them by the tail, since they can drop their tails if they feel threatened. Gently pick them up and allow them to hold on to your hand. Be aware that they can jump away from you.

### **Availability**

- Anoles are generally available year-round. They are collected from the Southern United States so shortages may occur at unpredictable times.
- Anoles can live in the shipping container for 2–4 days. Since anoles can move quickly and escape from you, the easiest way to transfer your anole to its new habitat is to open the container inside the habitat. Anoles are usually 2–5" long not including the tail. Their skin can rapidly alternate color between green and brown. Brown tends to be an indicator of stress—so do not be surprised if your anoles are brown when you first see them after shipment.

### **Captive Care**

#### **Habitat:**

- A glass or plastic aquarium/terrarium with a ventilated top provides a good classroom habitat. Plan your habitat to have at least one gallon of space per anole. The bottom of the tank should be covered with substrate; 1–2" of a moss and soil mixture is ideal. You can provide your anole with climbing branches, hiding places and live plants in the habitat. The humidity in the habitat should be kept at 60–70%. You can keep the humidity up with frequent misting with de-chlorinated water (at least once a day, bottled water or tap water that has been left out for 48 hours should have little chlorine). Anoles do best in very warm temperatures, roughly 80°F, but will survive at room temperature (68–77°F). A heat lamp ([Reptile Basking Lamp 15 W 5037](#)) aimed at one side of the habitat will allow the anole to regulate its body temperature by moving to different parts of the enclosure. A [Reptile Heating Pad 21 W 2212](#) is also a good addition to raise the temperature and provide a warm spot to aid in digestion.

## Care:

Food suitable for anoles includes crickets, mealworms and other small insects. These can be ordered ([Crickets 87 W 6102](#)), found at your local pet store, or you can collect your own insects. The size of the food should be no larger than half the size of the anole's head. Generally, an adult anole will consume 4–5 medium size crickets, or the equivalent in another insect, every 1–2 days. The food may be supplemented by a dusting with vitamins ([Reptivite Reptile Vitamins 21-2833](#)).

Anoles drink mostly from condensed water droplets, so misting is important to keep your anole hydrated. You should offer your anole a shallow water dish for bathing. Anoles shed their skin monthly. If you have one anole per gallon, it is wise to clean the habitat every week to two.

## Information

- Method of reproduction: Anoles breed sexually. Their breeding season lasts from spring through summer. You will see the males courting the females by posturing and bobbing their heads. If the female is ready to be bred, she will allow the male to grasp her by the neck and mate with her. Within about two weeks she will lay one egg and bury it in the substrate. If you do not want the egg to hatch, just pull it out and throw it away. Females can lay an egg every two weeks.
- Determining sex: Males tend to be larger than females and they have large throat fans that are bright pink in color. The males will extend these dewlaps when threatened or when they are trying to win a mate. Males may also have a dorsal crest just behind the head. Males have enlarged post-anal pores found below the vent, and two large scales found behind the vent.

## Life Cycle

- It takes about 5–7 weeks for eggs to hatch. Hatchling anoles are about 2" in length from snout to tail. They become sexually mature in about a year. A mature anole is 4–5" in length. Anoles can grow up to almost 9" long from snout to tail. If properly kept, an anole can live up to 7–9 years, though their lifespan is shorter in the wild.

## Wild Habitat

- The green anole, or American Chameleon, is indigenous to the sub-tropical areas of the southern United States. Their range stretches from southern Florida north to the Carolinas and westward into central Texas. They like to live in shrubbery and trees, on walls, rocks, and fences. Predators include cats, snakes, and birds.

## Special Notes

- These reptiles are capable of subtle color changes from bright green to dark brown and many shades in between. These colors depend on the animals' health, mood, and its surroundings. Anoles, like most reptiles, do not produce urine like mammals do. Instead, they produce urates, a white solid waste of uric acid. Anoles have adhesive pads on their toes allowing them to grasp almost any vertical surface.

## Recommended Disposition at the End of Class Use

- We do not recommend releasing any laboratory animal into the wild. As a laboratory animal, it has not encountered or learned wild survival skills and is therefore likely to come to an inhumane end.
- Adoption is the preferred disposition of a vertebrate
- If a capable owner cannot adopt the animal, it may be surrendered to your local humane society.
- If the animal is to be euthanized, we recommend consulting the AVMA guidelines on euthanasia (American Veterinary Medical Association, [http://www.avma.org/issues/animal\\_welfare/euthanasia.pdf](http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf)). According to these guidelines, acceptable methods of euthanasia for a lizard include exposure to CO<sub>2</sub> at greater than 60% (dependent on type) and barbiturate overdose (since this is a controlled substance, a veterinarian can do this for you). Do not freeze them as a method of sacrifice; the AVMA does not consider this to be a humane method of euthanasia.
- A deceased specimen should be disposed of as soon as possible. Consult your school's recommended procedures for disposal. In general, a small dead vertebrate should be handled with gloves, wrapped in an absorbent material (e.g. newspaper), wrapped again in an opaque plastic bag, then placed inside a opaque plastic bag that is sealed (tied tightly) before being placed in a general garbage container away from students.