

WALNUT CREEK SUPPLY

THE COMPLETE CARE GUIDE

Green Iguana

A herbivore that grows to six feet: plan for the adult from day one



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New owner? Go straight to Section 1. It is written so you can set up a safe, correct home and get through the first 48 hours without reading anything else first.

*Green iguanas are sold in pet stores every spring at 6 to 8 inches long — bright, curious little animals that sit on a forearm and flick a pink tongue at the world. They are also sold without a clear account of what they become. An adult green iguana is a **4 to 6 foot lizard weighing 10 to 20 pounds** that needs a custom-built enclosure the size of a large wardrobe, eats exclusively plants, carries Salmonella, and can break a child's arm with a tail whip when threatened. This is not a reason not to keep one — a well-socialized, properly housed green iguana is one of the most striking and genuinely engaging reptiles a person can share a home with, and they can be affectionate in a way that surprises people who've only known more aloof lizards. But this guide is written honestly, because the most common reason green iguanas end up in reptile rescues is that their owners didn't know what they signed up for. You're reading this guide, which means you will. Read the Quick Start first, and plan your adult enclosure before that baby outgrows the juvenile setup — because they do, and faster than most people expect.*

SECTION 1

Quick Start: Your First 48 Hours

1. **Set up the complete enclosure before your iguana arrives.** A juvenile iguana under 12 months can start in a **4'×2'×4' enclosure**, but it will outgrow this within a year. Source your adult enclosure materials now — a **6'×3'×6' custom build is the adult minimum**, and you need a plan for where it will go in your home before you bring the animal home as a baby.
2. **Establish your temperature gradient and confirm it with a probe thermometer.** Basking spot **95–105°F**, warm ambient air **85–90°F**, cool end **75–80°F**. Verify these numbers with a handheld infrared temperature gun and at least two probe thermometers before any animal goes in. A temperature strip stuck to the outside of the glass is not a useful measurement.
3. **Install your UVB lamp and run it for 24 hours before the iguana arrives.** Green iguanas require a **Ferguson Zone 3–4 UVB source** — a T5 HO 10% fluorescent tube is the correct product, positioned at the manufacturer-specified distance from the basking platform. Do not use compact spiral bulbs for iguanas; the UV gradient they produce is too steep and uneven for a large enclosure. Photoperiod 12–14 hours on / 10–12 hours off.
4. **Get the humidity working before the iguana arrives.** Target **60–80%** with a digital hygrometer. Install an ultrasonic or cool-mist fogger on a timer, add a large water dish the iguana can soak in, and include live or artificial plants to hold ambient moisture. Iguanas from humid tropical forests will not thrive in dry indoor conditions.
5. **Set up multiple climbing branches and a high basking platform.** Iguanas are **arboreal** — they live in trees, not on the ground. The basking platform should be elevated, positioned under the UVB lamp, and large enough for the iguana to stretch out fully. Branches at multiple heights give the iguana the ability to thermoregulate vertically, which is how they do it in the wild.
6. **Prepare the first salad before your iguana arrives.** Collard greens, mustard greens, or dandelion greens — washed, roughly chopped, lightly dusted with plain calcium powder — are the correct first meal. **Do not offer insects, crickets, mealworms, or protein of any kind. Not now, not ever.** Green iguanas are strict herbivores, and protein causes kidney disease. If a pet store employee told you to feed insects, they were wrong.
7. **Let the iguana settle for 48 to 72 hours before attempting handling.** Place it in the enclosure and leave it alone except for quiet food and water checks. It needs to find the basking platform, the cool end, and the water dish before the taming process begins.
8. **Wash your hands thoroughly after every contact with the iguana or its enclosure.** Green iguanas carry **Salmonella** — a bacterium they harbor with no ill effects to themselves but which can cause serious gastrointestinal illness in people. This is not a reason to avoid the species, but it is a non-negotiable hygiene rule, every single time.

9. **Plan your adult enclosure NOW, not when they outgrow the juvenile setup.** Write it down, measure the room, price the lumber. An adult green iguana reaches 4 to 6 feet in 2 to 3 years. Commercial reptile enclosures don't come in this size. Most owners build a floor-to-ceiling custom wooden or PVC build, or convert a large closet. The time to plan this is while your iguana is 8 inches — not when it's 3 feet long and you still have a 4-foot tank.
10. **Find an exotic animal veterinarian who sees lizards before you need one.** Iguanas need annual checkups and may develop health issues — metabolic bone disease, egg-binding in females, respiratory infections — that require specialist care. A vet who sees only dogs and cats is not prepared to treat a large lizard. Find yours now, confirm they see iguanas, and tape the number to the enclosure.

First-Time Starter Bundle

What needs to be in the house on day one, and what to look for in each category.

Essentials

- **An appropriate-sized enclosure for the iguana's current age** — a ventilated 4'×2'×4' wooden, PVC, or glass terrarium for juveniles under 12 months; a minimum 6'×3'×6' custom-built enclosure for animals approaching adult size. Enclosures should be taller than they are wide; iguanas climb. Solid walls on three sides reduce reflection stress.
- **An overhead basking lamp on a dimmer thermostat** — a high-output halogen or incandescent flood bulb over the basking platform; thermostat-controlled to maintain 95–105°F at the platform surface. The thermostat probe goes on the basking platform surface where the iguana lies.
- **A T5 HO 10% UVB tube** — full length to cover the enclosure; positioned at the manufacturer-specified distance above the basking platform. Replace every six months — UV output degrades well before visible light output does.
- **A separate ambient heat source** — ceramic heat emitters or a radiant heat panel on a thermostat to maintain 85–90°F warm ambient air temperature independent of the basking lamp, and to hold the 70–75°F overnight minimum when the basking lamp is off.
- **Two calibrated digital thermometers with probes** — one at basking platform level, one at the cool end. Plus an infrared temperature gun for spot-checking surfaces throughout the enclosure.
- **A digital hygrometer** — placed at mid-enclosure level away from the mister. You need a real reading, not a guess.
- **A cool-mist fogger or ultrasonic mister on a timer** — essential for achieving and maintaining 60–80% humidity in a large enclosure without manual misting three times a day.
- **A large water dish** — large enough for the iguana to fully soak in. This serves as the primary water source and contributes passively to ambient humidity.
- **Multiple branches and a basking platform** — large-diameter wood secured so it cannot shift or fall under the weight of a growing animal. Natural dragonwood, grapewood, and manzanita branches all work; commercially available reptile branches sourced and dried appropriately are the safest option.
- **Plain calcium carbonate powder (without D3)** — for dusting the daily salad.
- **Calcium with D3 and a reptile multivitamin** — for the supplement rotation schedule.

Ready to set up? Browse the essentials in our collections: [Reptile and Amphibian Enclosures](#) and [Reptile and Amphibian Terrarium Supplies & Accessories](#).

Enrichment

- **Live or artificial tropical plants** — pothos, hibiscus, and ficus all work well as live plants inside a humid enclosure and double as supplemental nibble food. Artificial plants add visual complexity and improve humidity retention without the care

overhead.

- **A background or backing on three walls** — reduces glass reflections that cause chronic territorial stress. Cork bark sheet, natural background panels, or craft paper on the enclosure exterior all work.
- **Multiple climbing levels at different heights** — ledges, shelves, or rope bridges give the iguana behavioral range in a tall enclosure. Different heights mean different temperatures, which the iguana uses for precise thermoregulation throughout the day.
- **A soaking tub or dedicated bath area** — a large plastic tote kept near the enclosure works well as a weekly soak station. It doesn't need to live inside the enclosure permanently.
- **A secure travel carrier** — sized for the animal's current body length, for vet trips and any necessary transport. A ventilated carrier is better for longer transit; a pillowcase is a traditional method that calm adult iguanas tolerate well for short trips.

Enrichment, one click away. Shop Reptile and Amphibian Accessories.

SECTION 2

Meet Your Green Iguana

Wild green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*) live across Central and South America and on many Caribbean islands — from Mexico south through Brazil and Paraguay — in a range of tropical and subtropical habitats dominated by humid forest, riverbank vegetation, and the canopy edge where sun meets shade. They are fundamentally **arboreal**, spending most of their time in the upper branches of trees near water. When threatened they drop into rivers below and swim away with fluid, powerful tail sweeps. On a good day they lie completely still in a patch of dappled sunlight, radiating the specific stillness of an animal that has decided it is invisible.

Trait	Detail
Common name	Green iguana
Scientific name	<i>Iguana iguana</i>
Native range	Central and South America, Caribbean
Wild habitat	Tropical and subtropical humid forest, riverbank canopy edge
Hatchling size	6–8 inches total length
Adult length	4–6 feet total length (snout to tail tip)
Adult weight	10–20 lbs in adult males; females typically smaller
Typical lifespan	10–20 years with good care
Activity pattern	Diurnal — active during daylight; baskes extensively
Social structure	Solitary — one per enclosure
Temperament	Highly variable — from gentle giant to seasonally territorial adult
Diet	Strict herbivore — 100% plant matter. No insects. No animal protein. Ever.

The honest commitment framing — what you are actually signing up for

This is the most important section in this guide. Please read it carefully.

A green iguana bought at a pet store is almost always 6 to 8 inches long and weighs a few ounces. It is genuinely manageable at that size. It fits in a 40-gallon tank. It eats from a small salad dish. A child can hold it on one hand. This is the animal people fall in love with.

Within 12 to 18 months, that animal is 2 to 3 feet long. Within 2 to 3 years, **a healthy male green iguana is 4 to 6 feet from snout to tail tip and weighs 10 to 20 pounds**. His enclosure will be the size of a large wardrobe — typically 6 feet tall, 6 feet wide, and 3 feet deep — and it will need to be custom-built, because no commercial reptile enclosure comes in that size. His tail, fully grown, can whip with enough force to break a child's arm or leave a serious bruise or laceration on an adult. His **claws are strong and sharp** and will lacerate skin when he scrambles while frightened. During **breeding season in late winter through spring, he may bite with little warning**, darken dramatically in color, and head-bob at anyone who approaches the enclosure.

None of this makes him a bad pet. A well-socialized, well-housed green iguana that has been handled consistently since babyhood can be genuinely affectionate — a real companion for 10 to 20 years. But green iguanas are one of the most commonly surrendered reptiles in the United States, and the reason is almost always the same: someone bought the baby without understanding the adult.

If you are ready for a **10 to 20 year commitment to a very large herbivorous lizard that needs a custom-built enclosure, high UVB, a carefully managed plant-based diet, daily handling, and an exotic vet**, you are on the right path. This guide is written for you.

Dewlap, parietal eye, and dorsal crest

Green iguanas have three physical features that frequently confuse new owners.

The **dewlap** is the large flap of skin hanging beneath the jaw that can be fanned out dramatically. Males have significantly larger dewlaps than females. The iguana extends it during territorial displays, for thermoregulation (it functions like a radiator fin in direct sun), and sometimes simply during stretching. A dewlap extension combined with head bobbing, body darkening, and lateral flattening is a threat display. Context determines meaning — learn to read the whole picture, not just one signal.

The **parietal eye** is a small, scale-covered sensory organ on the top of the skull, roughly centered between the eyes. It cannot form images but detects changes in light and shadow, and is involved in circadian rhythm regulation and UVB detection. Never approach your iguana from directly above — the parietal eye registers an overhead shadow as a predator approach, and the iguana will react defensively before your hand makes contact. Always approach from the side.

The **dorsal crest** is the row of spines running from the back of the neck down the full length of the spine and tail. On a healthy adult male these can reach 2 to 3 inches. The spines are not used as weapons, but they catch on fingers during handling and can cause lacerations if the animal thrashes. Be aware of their position whenever you're supporting a stressed animal.

Seasonal color changes and what they mean

Adult male green iguanas change color dramatically during breeding season — typically October through March — as testosterone levels peak. The characteristic bright green bleeds into orange, amber, and burnt sienna on the head, dewlap, and limbs. This is completely normal and not a sign of illness or stress. It is, however, a reliable signal that the male's behavior may shift and become more territorial. Females may show mild color intensification during the same period but far less dramatically.

What surprises new owners

Three things catch most new iguana owners off guard. The first is the **speed of growth**: an 8-inch hatchling can be 3 feet long within 18 months if it's eating and basking correctly. The second is the **strictness of the diet**: many iguanas will enthusiastically eat insects if offered them — they are curious animals and will investigate almost anything — but feeding protein even occasionally causes progressive kidney damage that doesn't show up clinically until significant harm is done. The iguana doesn't know what's bad for it. You do. The third surprise is **depth of personality**: a well-tamed, well-socialized iguana is not a passive decoration. It has preferences, moods, and a clear recognition of the people it knows — and demonstrates it.

SECTION 3

Enclosure Setup & Layout

The juvenile-to-adult progression

Most new iguana owners start with a commercially available enclosure and plan to upgrade. The upgrade timeline is shorter than most people expect, and planning the adult enclosure early saves money, stress, and a scramble when the animal is already outgrowing the juvenile setup.

Life stage	Age	Minimum enclosure size	Notes
Hatchling	0–6 months	4'×2'×3'	Paper towel or newspaper substrate; easy to monitor droppings and behavior
Juvenile	6–18 months	4'×2'×4'	Begin adding climbing branches at multiple heights
Sub-adult	18 months–3 years	5'×2.5'×5'	Many animals will need the adult build by this stage
Adult	3 years+	6'×3'×6' minimum	Custom-built; no commercial enclosure exists in this size

The custom-build reality

No commercial reptile enclosure comes in the adult iguana minimum of 6 feet tall by 6 feet wide by 3 feet deep. This is not a niche problem — it is the universal reality of adult iguana keeping, and understanding it before acquiring the animal is essential. The most common solutions are:

Custom wooden builds using melamine-coated plywood or sealed hardwood — cost-effective, well-insulating, and customizable with internal perch systems, lighting racks, and drainage. Seal all interior surfaces with reptile-safe polyurethane and allow full off-gassing (two to three weeks with good ventilation) before introducing the animal.

PVC enclosure builds — lighter than wood, waterproof, easier to deep-clean, and increasingly popular as the iguana community has matured. Higher material cost, but it lasts longer and resists humidity without warping.

Room conversion — for very large adult males, some keepers convert a closet corner, walk-in closet, or dedicated room into an iguana-proofed space. An iguana-proof room means every surface is sealed and washable, supplemental UVB lighting covers the full basking area, and there is no way for the animal to get behind furniture or reach electrical components.

Plan this before you need it. Designate the space now, price the materials, and begin sourcing. The animal will grow whether or not the build is ready.

Enclosure layout — temperature zones and climbing layers

Green iguanas thermoregulate by moving **vertically** — higher is warmer (closer to the basking lamp), lower is cooler. A tall enclosure with branches at multiple heights is not decoration; it is the primary thermoregulation mechanism. The layout description below runs from the top of the enclosure to the floor.

Top zone (warmest): the basking platform — a wide flat shelf or large-diameter branch section positioned 12–18 inches below the basking lamp and squarely within the UVB light cone. The iguana will spend most of its daylight hours here. The UVB tube runs directly above and parallel to this zone, spanning its full length.

Mid zone: secondary branches at three-quarter enclosure height. The transition zone between warm and cool, used for casual resting and lower-intensity basking. Live or artificial plants at this level provide cover and visual interest.

Lower zone (cooler): ground level. Large soaking dish, food dish, and substrate. Adult iguanas spend relatively little time on the ground but do descend to eat, drink, and soak.

Background: three solid walls with no exposed glass or clear surface behind the iguana's primary viewing angles. Reflections cause chronic territorial stress — an iguana fighting its own reflection in an all-glass enclosure is an iguana under constant low-grade alarm.

SECTION 4

Substrate Guide

Substrate	Best for	Performance	Notes
Newspaper or paper towel	Hatchlings, quarantine, sick animals	Zero particle ingestion risk; easy to inspect droppings; fully disposable	Replace as soiled; excellent for learning the animal's behavioral baseline
Coconut fiber (coco coir) + organic topsoil (roughly 60:40)	Juveniles and adults	Holds humidity well; comfortable for ground-level movement; gravid females may dig in it	Keep slightly moist, never waterlogged; inspect monthly for mold in humid conditions
Cypress mulch	Adults in large custom builds	Good humidity retention; aesthetically natural; low dust; comfortable underfoot	Source plain bark mulch from a reptile supplier; never aromatic or landscape-grade treated mulch
Reptile-safe artificial turf or rubber matting	Juveniles in glass enclosures	Easy to clean and sanitize; no particle risk; washable	Replace when showing wear; degrading fibers can harbor bacteria
Ceramic or slate tile (floor area under soaking dish)	Adults — partial flooring solution	Durable; easy to disinfect; no particle risk; provides stable footing in the soaking area	Cold surface — ensure it sits in the warm zone, not the cool end only
Loose fine sand	Avoid	Impaction risk if ingested; poor humidity retention; no natural analog for this species	No safe use case
Walnut shell, gravel, coarse bark chips	Avoid	Impaction risk; rough on feet and cloaca	Not appropriate at any age
Cedar or aromatic pine shavings	Never	Aromatic oils are toxic to reptiles	No safe use case for any reptile, ever
Calcium sand	Avoid outright	High impaction risk; not a reliable or safe calcium delivery vehicle	Remove from any setup immediately

SECTION 5

Heat, UVB & Humidity — The 3 Numbers

Green iguanas have among the highest UVB requirements of any commonly kept reptile. They are diurnal basking lizards from tropical environments where solar UVB at the canopy edge is intense. Inadequate UVB — not merely inadequate calcium supplementation — is the leading cause of **metabolic bone disease (MBD)** in captive iguanas, and MBD is the single most common cause of premature death. Getting these three numbers right simultaneously is the whole game in iguana husbandry.

Parameter	Target value	How to measure it	What goes wrong when it's off
Basking spot temperature	95–105°F	Infrared temperature gun on basking platform surface; probe thermometer at platform level	Too low: incomplete thermoregulation, sluggish digestion, reduced immune function; too high: thermal burns, heat stress, hyperthermia
Warm ambient air temperature	85–90°F	Probe thermometer suspended at mid-height on the warm side	Below 82°F: digestion slows; the iguana may fail to fully process meals
Cool end air temperature	75–80°F	Probe thermometer at cool-end mid-height	Below 72°F: too cold for this species even in daytime; above 83°F: no functional thermal gradient
Overnight minimum	70–75°F ; never below 65°F	Probe overnight with basking lamp off	Below 65°F: immune suppression; respiratory infection risk; potentially fatal in juveniles
UVB level (Ferguson Zone 3–4)	UVI 2.9–7.4 at basking zone	Solarmeter 6.5R or equivalent; or follow manufacturer distance chart for T5 HO 10%	Too low: MBD, bone softening, neurological symptoms; too high (uncommon at T5 HO levels): eye irritation
Ambient humidity	60–80%	Digital hygrometer at mid-enclosure	Below 55%: shedding problems, dehydration, respiratory irritation; above 85%: bacterial and fungal infection risk

UVB — why Ferguson Zone 3–4 matters for a large herbivore

The **Ferguson Zone** system classifies reptiles by the UV index their native environment naturally provides. Zone 1 animals live in deep shade; Zone 3–4 animals live in open sun or at the exposed canopy edge — conditions where solar UVB is at its most intense. Green iguanas are Zone 3–4 animals. They are built to absorb high UVB and synthesize vitamin D3, which drives calcium absorption, which keeps their very large bones dense and their musculature functional.

A compact spiral bulb in a 12-inch dome is not adequate for a 6-foot arboreal enclosure. The UV cone is too small and the output drops off too quickly at distance. **Use a T5 HO 10% tube long enough to span the basking zone** — ideally at least 36 to 48 inches — mounted at the manufacturer-specified distance above the basking surface (typically 10–15 inches without a reflector; closer with a high-quality reflector). **Replace the bulb every six months.** UV output decays significantly by the six-month mark even when the visible light looks completely normal.

Misting schedule and humidity management

Schedule	Method	Notes
1–2 times daily	Automated mister or ultrasonic fogger on a timer; or manual spray bottle	Morning mist when lights come on; optional second mist in early afternoon
Continuous passive	Large open soaking dish; live plants if present	Evaporation from a large water surface raises ambient humidity meaningfully in a sealed enclosure
Weekly	Full enclosure misting and substrate moisture check	Inspect substrate corners for mold buildup if humidity has run consistently high

SECTION 6

Diet & Nutrition — The Herbivore Standard



A strict herbivore: dark leafy greens form the base, with squash and other vegetables alongside, and fruit kept to a small occasional extra.

Green iguanas are **obligate herbivores**. Every system in their digestive tract is designed to break down plant matter. Feeding any form of animal protein — insects, crickets, pinky mice, eggs, chicken, cat food, dog food — causes progressive kidney damage and gout. An iguana who eats insects will show no obvious signs of illness for months or even years while kidney function steadily deteriorates. By the time clinical symptoms appear, significant organ damage has already occurred. This is not a guideline with exceptions. It is the species biology.

Many iguanas will eat insects if offered — they are curious foragers and will investigate almost anything. Do not read that eagerness as evidence the food is safe. It is not. You are responsible for the diet boundary, because your iguana cannot be.

The green diet rotation

Food	Category	Frequency	Notes
Collard greens	Staple leafy green	Daily rotation	High calcium, low oxalate; a primary base
Mustard greens	Staple leafy green	Daily rotation	Excellent calcium-to-phosphorus ratio; peppery flavor most iguanas accept readily

Food	Category	Frequency	Notes
Dandelion greens	Staple leafy green	Daily rotation	High calcium; excellent nutritional profile; free from untreated lawns
Turnip greens	Staple leafy green	Daily rotation	Another excellent low-oxalate calcium source; rotate with the others
Escarole	Staple leafy green	Daily rotation	Mild flavor; accepted easily; good calcium; broadens the rotation
Butternut squash	Staple vegetable	3–5 times per week	High vitamin A; shred or cube small; most iguanas enjoy it
Acorn squash	Staple vegetable	3–5 times per week	Good nutritional profile; similar to butternut; variety for the rotation
Bell pepper (any color)	Staple vegetable	3–5 times per week	High vitamin C; hydrating; slice or dice
Snap peas or green beans	Staple vegetable	2–4 times per week	Good filling component; low calorie; accepted readily
Hibiscus flowers and leaves	Supplemental	Several times per week	Iguanas relish hibiscus; nutritionally solid; grows well as an indoor potted plant
Mango	Occasional fruit — 10% max	1–2 times per week maximum	High natural sugar; use as an appetite stimulant for shy eaters or a training reward
Papaya	Occasional fruit — 10% max	1–2 times per week maximum	Well-tolerated; useful for gut health; within the fruit cap
Berries (strawberry, blueberry, raspberry)	Occasional fruit — 10% max	Once per week maximum	High sugar; good enrichment; keep within the 10% total fruit limit
Melon (watermelon, cantaloupe)	Occasional fruit — 10% max	Occasionally	Mostly water; useful for hydration in hot weather; counts against the fruit cap
Spinach	Limit strictly or avoid	Rarely if ever	High oxalates bind calcium in the gut and counteract supplementation; choose collards instead
Beet greens, Swiss chard	Limit	Rarely	Similar oxalate concerns as spinach; occasional small amounts in a varied rotation are acceptable
Kale	Use in moderation	Once or twice per week max	Contains goitrogens that interfere with thyroid function at high intake amounts; fine as a minor rotation component
Iceberg lettuce	Avoid as a staple	Never as a primary food	Roughly 95% water with near-zero nutrition; the iguana fills up and receives nothing useful
Avocado	Never	Never	Toxic to most reptiles; do not offer under any circumstance
Onion, garlic, leek	Never	Never	Thiosulfate compounds are toxic
Rhubarb	Never	Never	Oxalic acid content is toxic

Food	Category	Frequency	Notes
Insects, crickets, mealworms, any live prey	Never — absolutely never	Never	Causes progressive kidney disease and gout; the iguana may eat them eagerly; that eagerness does not make them safe
Dog food, cat food, any prepared animal product	Never	Never	High in animal protein; directly and cumulatively harmful to kidney function
Commercial iguana pellets as a staple	Not recommended	Not as a primary food	Most commercial iguana pellets are nutritionally poor and some contain animal protein; a fresh leafy green rotation is always preferable

The phosphorus/calcium ratio explained simply

Not all plant foods that look healthy are equal for an iguana's calcium metabolism. The core issue is **phosphorus**: foods high in phosphorus create a metabolic demand that pulls calcium out of bone even when calcium supplementation is occurring. The goal is a diet where **calcium-to-phosphorus ratio is at or above 2:1 across the overall rotation**. The five staple leafy greens — collards, mustard greens, dandelion greens, turnip greens, and escarole — all sit in an excellent range. Spinach, beet greens, and bananas pull in the wrong direction and undermine the supplementation schedule when used regularly.

The practical application is straightforward: **build the daily salad around the staple leafy greens, add the vegetable rotation for variety and nutrition, and use fruit as a small garnish only**. You don't need to calculate every meal if the staple base is correct.

Supplement schedule

Supplement	Schedule	Notes
Plain calcium carbonate powder (without D3)	Daily — dust the salad lightly at every feeding	D3 from supplements is fat-soluble and accumulates; keep it separate from daily calcium; UVB handles D3 synthesis naturally when the lamp is correct
Calcium with D3	Every other feeding for adults; daily for juveniles	Provides backup D3 support when UVB lamp age or positioning is uncertain
Reptile multivitamin	Twice monthly	Covers trace minerals the diet rotation may not fully provide at every meal

Feeding frequency and seasonal appetite changes

Feed **daily for all life stages**. Offer a fresh salad in the morning when the lights come on and the iguana has begun basking — a warm, thermoregulated iguana digests efficiently; an animal fed before it has had time to reach temperature may not process the meal properly.

Iguanas commonly reduce appetite in fall and early winter, roughly September through November. This is normal seasonal behavior corresponding to lower solar angles and reduced photoperiod in their native range. An iguana who was eating enthusiastically every day and shows disinterest for a week or two in October is almost certainly fine. Continue offering food daily. Do not force-feed a generally healthy animal on a short seasonal fast. If appetite loss lasts more than three weeks, or accompanies visible weight loss or other symptoms, it warrants investigation.

Hydration

A large soaking dish should be available at all times. Iguanas drink by lapping water from standing surfaces and also absorb moisture through the skin during extended soaking. Mist the enclosure and the iguana directly with warm water daily — iguanas in the wild are regularly wet from morning dew and tropical rainfall. Dehydration in captive iguanas is common and contributes to kidney stress, poor shedding, and reduced appetite. Change the water dish daily; standing water grows bacteria quickly in a warm, humid enclosure.

***Shop the food and supplies:** Browse Reptile & Amphibian Food and Live Feed Delivered!.*

SECTION 7

Shedding

Green iguanas shed their skin **in patches** rather than all at once, which often confuses new owners who expect a single dramatic shed like a snake produces. **Juveniles shed frequently** — roughly every four to six weeks during periods of rapid growth — while **adults shed several times per year** on a less predictable schedule. A healthy shed arrives gradually: patches of skin become dull, slightly grayish, and begin to separate from the underlying new layer. The iguana will often soak more frequently before and during a shed.

Patchy, overlapping shedding across different body regions is entirely normal. The head, dewlap, and spinal crest often shed at a different time from the body, and the tail is usually the last section to complete. This is not a sign of disease or nutritional deficiency by itself.

The spines and toes are the areas to watch. The individual spines of the dorsal crest and the tips of the toes are the most common sites for retained shed to accumulate layer by layer. Inspect carefully after every visible shedding event — a spine with retained shed from two or three cycles builds up into a constricting ring that damages the tissue beneath. The same applies to toe tips.

For any stuck shed, a **15 to 20 minute warm soak** in belly-depth lukewarm water is the first response. After soaking, retained shed on the body usually loosens enough to remove with gentle finger pressure or a damp cloth. **Never pull dry shed.** Dry retained shed adheres firmly to new skin, and tearing it causes open wounds that become infected. Soak first, always.

Increased enclosure humidity in the days surrounding a shed significantly reduces stuck shed. If your enclosure is running below 60%, a shed event is the moment to notice and correct that shortfall.

SECTION 8

Common Challenges & Solutions

Metabolic bone disease (MBD)

What you see: soft or visually flexible jaw — often called "rubber jaw" — that deforms when the iguana chews; trembling or shaking limbs during movement; bowed or deformed legs and spine; lethargy; reluctance or inability to climb; in advanced cases, spontaneous fractures from minimal impact. In juveniles, MBD can progress from subclinical to severely disabling in a matter of weeks. **Why:** the combination of inadequate UVB exposure and insufficient dietary calcium. In green iguanas this is almost always a UVB problem first — without adequate UVB, the iguana cannot synthesize enough vitamin D3 to absorb calcium from the diet regardless of how much is being supplemented. **What to do:** correct the UVB setup immediately — confirm the lamp is the correct type, confirm it is positioned correctly, and check whether it has exceeded the six-month replacement window; review the calcium supplement schedule; offer additional basking time. **When to call a vet:** as soon as you notice jaw softness or limb tremors. Early-stage MBD responds well to treatment; late-stage MBD causes permanent skeletal deformity.

Kidney disease from protein feeding

What you see: increased urination, loss of appetite, lethargy, swelling in the limbs or body from fluid retention, a general dull and unwell appearance. In advanced cases, **gout** — uric acid crystal deposits in the joints — produces visible swelling at the knees, elbows, and digits. Blood work reveals elevated uric acid. **Why:** the iguana's kidneys are not equipped to process animal protein. Uric acid, the nitrogen waste product of protein metabolism, accumulates and crystallizes in tissue. Even small, sporadic amounts of protein fed over months or years cause cumulative, irreversible damage. **What to do:** eliminate all protein from the diet immediately; provide optimal hydration; book a vet appointment for blood work to assess current kidney function. **When to call a vet:** within a week of noticing any of the above symptoms. Gout is painful and increasingly difficult to manage once it is established.

Seasonal aggression in males

What you see: a male who has been calm and handleable suddenly becomes difficult to approach — head bobbing, body flattened laterally to appear larger, dewlap extended, skin darkening to orange or amber, charging at the enclosure wall, lunging when you open the door, or biting with little warning. This typically begins in late winter (January through March in the Northern Hemisphere) and can last six to eight weeks. **Why:** reproductive hormones peak seasonally. This is normal physiology in adult males — not a training failure, not a medical problem, and not a behavioral change you caused. **What to do:** reduce non-essential handling during this period; wear long sleeves and protective gloves for necessary maintenance; work slowly and give the iguana maximum visual warning of your approach; never approach from above; never reach directly into the enclosure without first letting him see your hand approaching from the side. Most males return to their baseline temperament when the hormonal peak passes. **When to call a vet:** seasonal aggression itself does not require veterinary attention; a bite wound that shows signs of infection, or an iguana who remains aggressively territorial well outside the normal seasonal window, warrants a check.

Internal parasites

What you see: loose or mucus-coated stool; visible worms in the stool; unexplained weight loss in an animal that appears to be eating; general dull appearance, reduced activity, and rough skin texture. **Why:** a range of intestinal parasites including pinworms, flagellates, and coccidia are common in captive iguanas, particularly those acquired from pet stores or large distribution chains. Some are benign at low levels; others cause significant malnutrition over time. **What to do:** collect a fresh fecal sample in a sealed container and take it to your exotic vet for microscopic analysis. Do not treat with over-the-counter dewormers without a diagnosis — different parasites require different treatments, and treating blindly is ineffective and may be harmful. **When to call a vet:** any visible parasites in stool, any persistent loose stool lasting more than a week, or any unexplained weight loss.

Thermal burns

What you see: blistered, raised, discolored, or peeling scales on the dorsal (back) or ventral (belly) surface; in severe cases, exposed tissue visible beneath lifted scales. Most commonly found on the dorsal surface from a basking lamp positioned too close to the basking platform, or on the belly from a heat mat used without thermostat control. **Why:** the iguana's pain response is slow enough that it cannot self-regulate away from a dangerously hot surface before contact damage occurs. **What to do:** correct the heat source configuration and thermostat settings immediately; move the iguana to a clean, properly thermostatted enclosure while healing; keep the affected area clean and dry. **When to call a vet:** any burn that shows exposed tissue, that does not improve within 48 hours, or that develops swelling, discharge, or odor.

Egg-binding (dystocia) in females

What you see: a female who is visibly swollen in the lower abdomen, straining and digging repeatedly without producing eggs, alternating between restlessness and lethargy, and has lost interest in food. Females do not need to have mated to develop and attempt to lay eggs — unfertilized clutches are common in captive females and can number 30 to 70 eggs. **Why:** the eggs cannot be passed because no suitable laying site was provided, because an egg is malpositioned or malformed, or because calcium deficiency has impaired the muscular contractions needed to pass them. **What to do:** provide a laying container filled at least 12 inches deep with moist topsoil or a coco fiber and topsoil mix, large enough for the female to half-bury herself; offer warm soaks twice daily; if she is clearly trying to dig and no eggs are produced within 24 hours, the situation is urgent. **When to call a vet:** any female who has been actively straining without depositing eggs for 24 hours, or who appears systemically unwell. Dystocia can be fatal and is a veterinary emergency.

Rostral abrasion (nose rubbing)

What you see: raw, reddened, and progressively open wounds on the snout; the iguana repetitively pressing its nose against the enclosure wall, screen, or glass; in chronic or severe cases, the underlying bone can be exposed. **Why:** the iguana sees its own reflection or perceives space beyond a transparent surface as an escape route or territorial boundary. This is a chronic stress behavior, not curiosity. Iguanas who are in enclosures that are too small, insufficiently enriched, or all-glass without background coverage develop this behavior consistently. **What to do:** cover three sides and the back wall with an opaque background immediately; add climbing furniture and visual complexity at multiple levels; increase daily handling if the iguana is calm enough for it. Clean the wound with dilute chlorhexidine and keep it dry. **When to call a vet:** any wound that penetrates to underlying tissue, or that shows signs of infection.

Tail whip, digit loss, and handling injuries

What you see: a rapid tail sweep during handling — the iguana pivots and whips its tail with significant force; in extreme defensive responses, tail autotomy (voluntary detachment) is possible though less common in iguanas than in smaller geckos. Toes or digits can also be lost through improper restraint, entanglement in mesh, or fight injuries from inappropriate cohabitation. **Why:** iguanas use the tail whip as a primary defensive response when they feel trapped or cannot escape. A full-grown adult male's tail can cause bruising, lacerations, and — documented in multiple accounts — broken fingers and cracked ribs. This is not aggression. It is the flight-defense response of a very large animal under genuine stress. **What to do:** for a handler injury, treat as a blunt-force wound or laceration; for digit or tail loss on the iguana, keep the wound site clean and dry and monitor closely for infection. **When to call a vet:** any wound that shows infection signs or fails to heal cleanly within several days.

Obesity from excess fruit

What you see: a visibly rounded, heavy-bodied iguana with fat deposits evident above the hips and at the base of the limbs; reduced willingness to climb; general sluggishness; possible refusal of leafy greens in preference to fruit and high-sugar items. **Why:** fruit is highly palatable and iguanas find it hard to resist, but its natural sugars contribute to fatty liver disease and overall metabolic strain when given as a large dietary proportion. An iguana with regular access to unlimited mango and papaya will often reduce its intake of the leafy greens that form the nutritional foundation of its diet. **What to do:** return the diet to 70% leafy greens and 20% vegetables, with fruit capped at 10% by volume. Reduce the fruit ratio, not the total food quantity — sudden

caloric restriction stresses the animal. **When to call a vet:** for a visibly obese iguana, a vet appointment to assess liver function and establish a supervised diet plan is a worthwhile investment.

Quick reference

What you see	Likely cause	What to do	Vet urgency
Soft jaw, trembling limbs, deformed bones	MBD — UVB or calcium deficiency	Correct UVB setup immediately; review calcium	Within days; sooner if jaw deformity visible
Swollen joints, lethargy, increased urination	Kidney disease or gout from protein feeding	Eliminate protein; optimize hydration	Within a week
Head bobbing, darkening, charging in late winter	Seasonal male aggression	Reduce handling; use protective gear; wait it out	Only if bite wound becomes infected
Loose stool, weight loss, visible parasites	Internal parasites	Fecal exam with exotic vet	Within a week
Blistered or peeling scales on back or belly	Thermal burn	Correct heat source immediately; clean dry wound	Open tissue: same day
Female straining, distended abdomen, no eggs	Egg-binding (dystocia)	Provide lay box; warm soaks	Same day if straining 24+ hours
Raw, bloody snout; repetitive nose rubbing	Rostral abrasion	Cover enclosure walls; increase enrichment	Bone exposure: same day
Whip injury to handler; laceration or bruise	Defensive tail whip	Treat wound; review handling technique	Serious laceration: urgent care for handler
Heavy rounded body, reduced climbing	Obesity from excess fruit	Reduce fruit to 10%; restore leafy green base	Vet check if liver disease is suspected

SECTION 9

Handling & Taming

The commitment to daily handling

A tame green iguana is one of the most impressive animals you can share a home with — calm, curious, and genuinely responsive to the people it knows. An untamed or poorly socialized adult green iguana is a different matter entirely: unpredictable, powerfully built, and capable of real injury. The difference between these two outcomes is consistent, gentle daily handling that begins early and never lapses for long stretches of time.

There is no shortcut to a tame iguana. You earn it, one session at a time.

How to approach and support a green iguana safely

Never approach from above. The parietal eye on the top of the skull detects overhead shadow as a predator. An iguana who sees your hand descending from above will respond defensively before contact. Approach from the side, at the iguana's eye level, with slow and clearly visible movement.

Support the entire body. An adult green iguana is a heavy, powerful animal that cannot be safely held by its midsection alone. Support the chest and the full length of the torso with one arm, and control the hindquarters and the base of the tail with your other hand or forearm. A loose, unsupported tail whips freely. Tail control is not optional once the animal is over 18 inches — it is the single most important handling technique for safety.

Keep sessions short and genuinely calm in the early weeks. Two to five minutes of calm, positive handling builds more trust than twenty minutes of stressful restraint. A relaxed iguana who enjoyed the interaction will be measurably easier to handle in the next session. An iguana who thrashed until it escaped has just learned that thrashing works.

Building trust — the daily session approach

Days 1–7: no handling. Sit beside the enclosure at the iguana's most active time of day, speak quietly, and let it habituate to your presence and voice without pressure.

Days 7–14: open the enclosure door and let your hand rest on the flat surface near the iguana without moving toward it. A curious juvenile will often approach to investigate. This is the desired outcome — allow the iguana to decide to interact on its own terms.

Days 14–30: begin picking up with a smooth scoop from below, supporting the full body from chest to tail base. Keep first sessions to two or three minutes. Return the iguana to the enclosure before you see stress signals, not after.

Ongoing: daily sessions, gradually extended as the animal's comfort increases. An iguana that can rest calmly on a shoulder, eat from your hand, and show no defensive posturing when you reach into the enclosure has been successfully socialized — and it took daily work to get there.

Reading the stress and aggression signals

Signal	What it means
Slow, deliberate head bobbing	Territorial awareness — "I see you, I am a large animal"
Rapid head bobbing	Active agitation or threat — do not reach in
Dewlap extension alone	May be thermoregulation or mild territorial display — context determines meaning
Body flattened laterally	Making itself look larger — clear threat display

Signal	What it means
Skin darkening to orange or brown	Elevated testosterone or significant alarm
Tail rising or beginning to sweep	Imminent tail strike — do not reach in; back away
Eyes tracking you without body movement	Alert awareness — watching, not yet threatening
Tongue flicking	Normal sensory behavior — the iguana is gathering chemical information about the environment

Children, families, and safety

Green iguanas and children can coexist well, but the supervision standard for a large reptile is higher than for smaller animals. An adult iguana's claws can lacerate a child's skin without any deliberate aggression — simply while scrambling for grip during handling. Its tail produces real force.

Children under twelve should handle a well-tamed iguana only while seated on the floor or a low surface, with an adult's hands within reach as a backup. Teach children to stay still and let the iguana walk or rest rather than restraining it. End every interaction at the first sign of defensive behavior. Never allow a child to hold the iguana near the face. After every interaction — for every person — **wash hands thoroughly with soap for at least 20 seconds**. Salmonella management is consistent hygiene, every time.

SECTION 10

Routine Care Calendar

How often	What to do
Daily	Prepare and offer a fresh salad; lightly dust with plain calcium powder at every meal
Daily	Confirm basking platform temperature and warm ambient side temperature
Daily	Confirm UVB lamp came on and off on its programmed photoperiod
Daily	Refill and spot-clean the soaking water dish
Daily	Mist the enclosure and the iguana directly with warm water; check hygrometer reading
Daily	Spot-clean — remove droppings, urate deposits, and any uneaten food
Daily	Observe the iguana during its active basking period for alertness, posture, eye clarity, and body condition
Daily	Conduct a taming and handling session (after the initial settle-in period)
Weekly	Fully clean and disinfect the soaking water dish with hot water; refill fresh
Weekly	Inspect all toes and spinal crest spines for retained shed
Weekly	Warm soak in belly-depth water for 15–20 minutes; aids hydration and shedding
Weekly	Review body condition — visible ribs indicate underweight; very rounded abdomen and heavy fat deposits at hip base may indicate obesity
Weekly	Prep the next week's food rotation; wash and store greens properly
Monthly	Full enclosure deep clean — remove all furniture and substrate; disinfect all surfaces with reptile-safe disinfectant; allow full dry before replacing
Monthly	Inspect all branches and ledges for structural stability; tighten or replace anything that shifts under the animal's weight
Monthly	Review supplement stock; reorder before running out
Monthly	Photograph the iguana from above and from the side as a body condition baseline
Every 6 months	Replace the T5 HO 10% UVB bulb regardless of visible output
Annually	Exotic vet wellness visit including a fecal exam for parasite screening; blood work recommended for iguanas over 5 years

SECTION 11

When to See a Vet

Green iguanas are stoic animals and mask illness well. By the time a visible symptom appears, the underlying problem has usually been developing for weeks. **When you're uncertain whether to call, call.** A five-minute phone conversation with an exotic vet is always better than a week of watching and waiting.

Go today — same day or emergency:

- Prolapse of any tissue from the cloaca — true emergency; do not attempt to reduce it yourself
- Open-mouth breathing, wheezing, labored respiration, or any audible clicking with each breath
- A female who has been actively straining without depositing eggs for 24 or more hours
- Any obvious fracture, open wound with exposed tissue, or bleeding that does not stop within several minutes
- Thermal burn with exposed bone or tissue, or tissue that appears to be dying
- Sudden complete loss of coordination, circling, seizure-like activity, or unresponsiveness to touch
- Visible prolapse of the hemipenis in males — do not attempt to reduce this yourself; it is an emergency
- Jaw that is visibly deformed or cannot be closed

Book within a few days:

- Visible jaw softness or limb tremors — early MBD
- No stool for five or more days with no response to soaking
- Progressive appetite loss outside of normal seasonal slow-down, accompanied by any visible weight loss
- Swollen joints at knees, elbows, or digit joints — possible gout
- Any new lump or mass anywhere on the body
- Persistent loose or mucus-coated stool lasting more than a week
- Rostral wounds that penetrate through skin to underlying tissue
- Eyes that are sunken, cloudy, have visible discharge, or are slow to respond to light
- Any sudden behavioral change in a previously calm animal outside of the known seasonal aggression window

Find your exotic animal vet now, before you need one. Confirm they have experience with large lizards, ask specifically whether they treat iguanas, and ask what their after-hours or urgent care protocol is. Bring a written temperature log, your supplement schedule, and a fresh fecal sample in a sealed container to any scheduled appointment.

SECTION 12

FAQ

How big do green iguanas get?

Adult green iguanas reach **4 to 6 feet in total length** from snout to tail tip, with large males frequently at the upper end of that range. Body weight in a healthy adult male is typically 10 to 20 pounds. Females are generally smaller, averaging 3 to 4 feet and 6 to 10 pounds. The hatchlings and juveniles sold in pet stores are typically 6 to 8 inches and weigh just a few ounces — the gap between baby size and adult size is one of the most significant of any commonly kept pet reptile, which is why planning for the adult animal from the moment you acquire the baby is so important.

What do green iguanas eat?

Green iguanas are strict herbivores — they eat exclusively plant matter, and feeding any form of animal protein causes progressive and ultimately fatal kidney damage. The daily diet should be built around leafy greens (roughly 70% of total food volume): collard greens, mustard greens, dandelion greens, turnip greens, and escarole form the best staple base. Vegetables — butternut squash, acorn squash, bell pepper, snap peas — make up roughly 20%. Fruit (mango, papaya, berries, melon) is limited to about 10% and used as a garnish rather than a core component. Avoid spinach, iceberg lettuce, avocado, onion, garlic, and rhubarb, and never feed insects, crickets, dog food, cat food, or any animal product under any circumstances.

Do green iguanas need a huge enclosure?

Yes — and the honest answer is that no commercial reptile enclosure is manufactured in adult iguana size. The minimum for an adult green iguana is **6 feet tall by 6 feet wide by 3 feet deep**, and most experienced iguana keepers would describe that as a tight minimum for a large male. Juveniles can start in a 4'×2'×4' enclosure, but outgrow it within 12 to 18 months. The adult enclosure is almost always a custom-built structure — a tall wooden or PVC cabinet, or a converted closet or room. The right time to source materials and designate the space is while the animal is still a baby, not when it is a 3-foot sub-adult who has already outgrown the juvenile setup and you're scrambling.

Are iguanas good pets for beginners?

Green iguanas are not recommended as a first reptile for most beginners, and their common sale as easy starter pets is one of the primary reasons they are among the most surrendered reptiles in the country. They have genuinely complex requirements: high-level UVB, large custom enclosures, a strict herbivore diet with a critical calcium-to-phosphorus balance, significant daily taming work, and seasonal behavioral changes in males that can be intense. A keeper who researches thoroughly, plans the adult enclosure before they need it, commits to daily handling from the start, and has access to an exotic vet can absolutely succeed with a green iguana. But someone expecting an easy, low-maintenance first reptile should start with a less demanding species. If you're here because you've already done the research and you understand what you're committing to — this guide is written for you.

Do iguanas need UVB light?

Yes, absolutely and critically. Green iguanas are Ferguson Zone 3–4 animals — they evolved under intense tropical sunlight and require high-level UVB to synthesize vitamin D3 and absorb calcium properly. Inadequate UVB is the leading cause of metabolic bone disease in captive iguanas, and MBD is the most common cause of premature death. The correct product is a T5 HO 10% fluorescent tube long enough to span the basking zone, mounted at the manufacturer-specified distance above the basking platform. Replace the bulb every six months regardless of whether it still visibly lights — UVB output degrades well before visible output does. A compact spiral bulb in a small dome fixture is not adequate for a large enclosure.

How long do green iguanas live?

With good care, green iguanas live **10 to 20 years** in captivity, and well-maintained individuals have exceeded that range. This gives them a lifespan comparable to a medium-sized dog, which means the baby iguana you bring home today will likely still be with you when that child starting elementary school is in college. The factors that most reliably extend lifespan toward the top of the range are a correct enclosure with adequate height and basking space from the start, a strict herbivore diet with the right calcium-to-phosphorus balance, consistent high-level UVB, regular warm soaks and adequate humidity, daily handling to minimize chronic stress, and annual veterinary wellness checks.

Why is my iguana aggressive?

The most common reason, in adult males, is the time of year. **Adult male green iguanas become seasonally aggressive during breeding season** — typically January through April — when testosterone peaks. The male will head-bob, darken dramatically in color, extend his dewlap, flatten his body laterally to appear larger, and may bite or whip with little warning. This is normal reproductive biology, not a behavioral problem, and most males return to their baseline temperament when the hormonal peak passes. Outside of breeding season, persistent aggression usually indicates inadequate husbandry — an enclosure that is too small, insufficient UVB or heat, an inadequate diet, or a lack of consistent handling. A sudden and unexplained shift to aggression in a previously calm animal, outside of the known seasonal window, warrants a veterinary check to rule out a pain or illness component.

Do iguanas carry salmonella?

Yes. Green iguanas, like most reptiles, carry *Salmonella* bacteria in their intestinal tract with no illness to themselves. Salmonella can cause serious gastrointestinal illness in people, with severity ranging from uncomfortable to hospitalization-level — the risk is highest for young children, elderly individuals, and anyone who is immunocompromised. The management is entirely practical: **wash your hands thoroughly with soap for at least 20 seconds after every contact with the iguana or any enclosure surface**, keep the iguana away from kitchen and food preparation areas, and supervise closely when children or vulnerable individuals handle the animal. Millions of iguana owners manage this risk successfully every day — it is not a reason to avoid the species, but it is a reason to maintain consistent hygiene without exception.

Do iguanas like to be held?

A well-socialized iguana that has been handled consistently from a young age can become genuinely comfortable with — and in many cases appears to seek out — human contact. These animals will rest calmly on a shoulder for extended periods, seek warmth from a human body, and visibly relax in the hands of people they know well. Getting there requires daily handling sessions starting in babyhood, steady patience, and consistent respect for the iguana's stress signals when they appear. An iguana acquired as an adult with an unknown socialization history may require weeks or months of patient, daily work before it becomes reliably calm. The capacity for tameness is real — but it is earned, not assumed, and never permanent without maintenance.

Can two iguanas live together?

Two iguanas should not generally share an enclosure, particularly in a standard home setting. Male iguanas are territorial and will fight seriously, causing real injuries. Two females may occasionally cohabit in a very large enclosure — significantly larger than the individual adult minimum — with no male present, multiple basking platforms, multiple feeding stations, and careful daily monitoring. Even compatible females commonly develop dominant-subordinate dynamics where the subordinate animal is quietly outcompeted for warmth and food over weeks, losing weight and showing chronic stress before the keeper recognizes the pattern. One iguana per enclosure is the safe standard for most keepers, especially those without significant experience managing iguana social dynamics.

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SECTION 13

Every Purchase Gives Back

Before we earn a dime, **10% of every purchase at Walnut Creek Supply goes to no-kill animal shelters across the country.** Not at checkout. Not as an option. Off the top of every order, every day — because we believe responsible pet ownership and community care are the same commitment made in two different directions.

That means something specific for iguana keepers. Green iguanas are among the most commonly surrendered reptiles in the United States, and nearly every one of those surrenders traces back to the same beginning: a baby iguana sold without a clear account of what it becomes. If you've read this guide, you understand the adult animal. You've planned the enclosure. You've read the diet section twice. You know what you're actually signing up for. That makes you exactly the kind of keeper these animals deserve.

If you're in a position to adopt rather than shop — reptile rescues across the country have beautiful, healthy adult iguanas waiting for a keeper who has a 6-foot custom enclosure and a 20-year plan. They were surrendered by people who didn't. You do.

We're a family business in Christiana, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. We grow our own food, keep our own animals, and stock the clean-label, USA-made goods we'd put in front of our own pets — **no mystery ingredients**, no unsafe substrates, and no iguana will ever leave our care guides without a fully honest picture of what it becomes. If you have a question about your iguana's UVB setup, its calcium schedule, how to handle the breeding season aggression period safely, or where to find a qualified exotic vet in your area, call us at **(717) 983-8069**. We'd rather talk it through with you.

Welcome to 10 to 20 years with one of the most remarkable animals in the reptile hobby.

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