

Clash of the Geckos

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These are the two golden gecko girls that are the new addition to the gecko clan. They are also Shrub's best friends. Shrubelinda hanging out on the glass. Like many herpkeepers, both new and experienced alike, I have learned a lot about my herp pets through trial and error. Some of what I know is based on my own experiences, and other parts are based on advice, both good and bad, from different sources. My golden gecko Shrubelinda is a great example of this.

I found Shrubelinda (Shrubs for short) in a pet shop more than 2 years ago, in a cage with a couple of young leopard geckos. At the time, I had never seen a golden gecko before, and knew nothing about them. I was told that they could be housed with leopard geckos and had all the same requirements for care and feeding. The store didn't know which sex this golden gecko was, and I only had my experience with sexing leopard geckos to go off of, so I mistakenly presumed that he was a she.

Anyway, he lived with my three leopard geckos for quite awhile without any noticeable issues. Later on, however, I began to see some "scuff marks" on his back and evidence of his tail being scratched or bitten. Shortly thereafter, there were altercations that I would only witness the end of, where it looked like he was being chased or harassed by the others and was scrambling to get away. I finally discovered that Shrubs was being the instigator, getting in their faces and "squawking" at them. At this point, I was already hunting for a new cage because I realized that the current situation wasn't working out the way I had hoped.

Unfortunately, I didn't get them separated in time and I learned the hard way that regardless of what a pet shop tells you, mixing species that are not similar is never a good idea without doing extensive research first. Beyond the species disagreements that can happen, one of the species will probably not be in a suitable environment and won't receive the proper requirements for optimal health.

When I once again heard a commotion developing in Geckoland, I ran over to the cage I saw that poor Shrubelinda had lost his tail during a skirmish. I felt really horrible that this happened, and I never did find his severed tail, either. I believe that one of my conniving leopard geckos had an extra-long snack. Oh, the humanity! At this point, due to irreconcilable differences, I deemed it necessary for Shrubelinda to move out and find his own place. No more blood would be shed on my watch!

Now Shrubelinda had his own home, with all the amenities, and a whole lot of extra space. He didn't talk as much as he used to and he looked kind of lonely. I decided that it was time to find him some friends. A couple of months ago at a reptile show, I was able to get a couple of female golden geckos to keep him company. Now Shrubs seems quite happy and talks to his ladies all the time. Even right now as I write this blog, he is chattering away in his charming voice. It's a bit hard to describe what it sounds like, but I guess it's like a cross between a squirrel and a chicken. Now when I hear his squawking, I know there isn't any "gecko on gecko crime" being committed, he's just talking to his treasured ladies. Other than the occasional bark from my dog, Shrubelinda is the loudest pet that I have. His tail grew back and it even has the same color and texture that it had before, but I can still see where it originally broke off.

I think golden geckos are an underappreciated species and deserve much more attention than they get. They are pretty easy to take care of, and although they are not very brightly colored, they have great personalities and are fun to watch as they interact with each other and hunt for crickets. There doesn't seem to be much information available about them, though, and often what you do find is incomplete and often inaccurate. Although much of their diet is insects, they also enjoy fruit, and bananas seem to be their favorite. I have found that hand feeding them banana baby food or crushed bananas is a great way to tame them, too. Now when they see the same red spoon that I always use, they come running and eat right out of it in my hand. They are also very alert and curious about their surroundings. They seem to pay close attention to anything going on outside of their cage and they turn their heads to watch whatever is happening nearby at any hour of the day.

So it turned out that golden geckos were not at all suited to live harmoniously with leopard geckos. Apart from their starting

a fight club in my living room, they didn't even have the same requirements for their environment, as golden geckos need a much higher humidity and other considerations such as climbing branches and a taller cage. So even though I wanted to believe what I was told, I should have done my own research first, and then I would have avoided gecko Armageddon. Take it from me, do your homework first!

-The Toad Talker

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