

Green & Brown Anoles

We may take them for granted because we're so used to them, but visitors are frequently curious and fascinated by our two most common small lizards.



Green Anole

Anolis carolinensis

APPEARANCE



max. length to 8 inches; solid color; *female*—light stripe down back (*left*); *male*—no stripe

DEWLAP

creamy white in Southwest Florida but pink elsewhere

COLORATION

bright green to light brown, even colors; green on vegetation or light background; brown on bark or dark background; tend to stay green when temperatures over 70°; in cold weather tend to stay brown

LIFESPAN

2–3 years

HABITAT

native to North America and West Indies; in West Indies, coexists with Brown Anole by staying in canopies of forests; cold tolerant and found to southern Tennessee

BREEDING

mate late spring to early summer; several clutches with 2 eggs each; eggs laid in decaying vegetation higher *in trees*; 60-90 days to hatch

ESCAPE

usually flees by running up

DIET

mostly insects but other small invertebrates; also will prey upon young Brown Anoles



A Green Anole dines on a honey bee.

Brown Anole

Anolis sagrei sagrei

APPEARANCE

max. length to 8.5 inches; *female*—diamond pattern with stripe on back (*right*); *male*—spots/patterns but no diamond-like shapes



DEWLAP

bright orange with yellow border

COLORATION

brown to very dark brown; varied colors; large males become really dark during territorial displays but quickly fade to dull brown when approached by anything other than another male brown anole

LIFESPAN

about 3 years

HABITAT

native to West Indies; in West Indies, coexists with Green Anole by living on ground or within a few feet of ground; not cold tolerant and found only in peninsular Florida

BREEDING

mate late spring to early summer; several clutches with 2 eggs each; eggs laid in decaying vegetation *on ground*; 60-90 days to hatch

ESCAPE

usually flees by running down

DIET

mostly insects but other small invertebrates; also will prey upon young Green Anoles

Anole Factoids

- Anoles belong to the genus *Anolis*, the same family as iguanas. Even though they can rapidly change color, anoles are not in the same family as chameleons, which are native to Africa and Madagascar.
- Three pronunciations are common and acceptable: *uh-no'-lee*, *an'-ole*, or *uh-nole'*.
- Anoles have long toes with claws and adhesive toepads, enabling them to climb up almost any surface.
- Both male and female anoles have dewlaps, but the male's is larger. Dewlaps are used for threats, courtship, and defending territory. Doing "push-ups" is another threat display.
- Mature male anoles may display a crest, called a *roach*, that runs down their backs and is used to impress other males when competing for territory or for females (*below*).



- Anoles shed skin in pieces, like people peeling after a sunburn, rather than all at once like snakes. Anoles recycle (eat) the flakes, a good source of minerals.
- There are over 200 species of anoles found in North and Central America; 11 are found in Florida but only two are regularly found in Corkscrew (so far).
- Anoles do not change color for camouflage but because of temperature or as a form of communication; for Green Anoles, *green is keen and brown is down* – when two males fight, the winner turns bright green while the loser turns brown
- Green and Brown Anoles are not natural enemies; until the 1970's, Greens were the only anoles in Southwest Florida and expanded to ground habitats; with the introduction of Browns, they are returning to their natural canopy habitat