



Making a Chameleon Feeder Run Cup

by Bill Strand



This tutorial was originally featured in the Dragon Strand chameleon caging company newsletter. You can sign up for this bi-weekly informational email at <https://dragonstrand.com/newsletter>

A Brief Introduction & History of the Chameleon Feeder Run

As we come to the end of 2018 we are celebrating the 16th anniversary of the Chameleon Feeder Run! This concept solved the standard problems of feeder insects sitting in feeder cups and not providing the required movement to attract a chameleon's attention. By adding a back to the cup, the insects would climb and provide the movement to attract the chameleons' eye, but still stay contained in their cup. These feeder runs were first conceived and publicized in the Hints & Tips section of the January 2003 issue of the Chameleons! eZine (<http://www.chameleonsnews.com>). It has been a staple in chameleon husbandry ever since.

The Chameleon Feeder Run was originally conceived as a solution to getting freshly imported chameleons to get used to cup feeding. They would view bowls as foreign objects and when insects stopped moving they would be ignored by the chameleon. The solution, which worked very well, was to leave a vertical piece to the cup which allowed the feeders to climb and provide natural movement to attract a chameleon. As the original purpose was for acclimation and quarantine situations there was no effort put into making it look nice. It was meant to be put together cheaply, quickly and then disposed of! But the design quickly found its way into standard, every day chameleon keeping as it worked beautifully for even acclimated chameleons

This concept has been re-imagined many times since then and the community has put efforts into making professional looking feeder run cups.

It works beautifully in any cage so I'd like to take this time to go over the basics in creating your own feeder run cups. We will make a very inexpensive version and I will leave it up to you to create the next generation chameleon feeder run cup!



The originally presented Feeder Run cup was meant to aid in quarantine and acclimation so was to be disposable.



Professionally made Feeder Run cups are now available which will look good in your living room cage. This one is made by Nick Barta at Full Throttle Feeders.



Getting Prepared

Every household will have a different combination of tools materials. You are welcome to substitute any of the parts I have here for items and tools which you have.

Parts Used (substitutions encouraged):

- Washed out plastic water jug, milk jug, soda bottle, etc...
- Shade cloth or any other climbable surface you can glue to plastic. **CAUTION:** metal screen or material with sharp edges should only be used if you take precautions to protect chameleon tongues!
- A extra large paper clip

Tools Used:

- Scissors
- Glue Gun
- Drill with 1/8" bit

Directions to Build Chameleon Feeder Run:

Step 1: Cut Out Opening

Cut an “L” shape out of the jug.

Tip 1: leave enough of a wall on the bottom that the feeder insects you use will not be able to climb out.

Tip 2: allow enough material on the sides of the vertical part so that the climbing insects cannot just reach over and grab the side to escape.





Step 2: Drill Drainage Holes

Drill drainage holes in the bottom. This is to ensure that the feeders do not drown or create an unhygienic mess if water gets in. Obviously, keep the holes too small for the feeders to escape. I use a 1/8" drill bit.



Step 3: Add Climbing Surface

With the first ones I made I used fiberglass screening and made sure the edges were all safely glued. I now use sun shade material made of nylon as it is softer. I glue the strip of sun shade using a hot glue gun, though silicone would work as well. If you use nylon sun shade remember that it will melt with high temperatures so practice using the glue gun. I apply the glue and wait until it starts to cool before pushing down the sun shade. Make sure that all the edges are glued down so that the feeder insects do not climb behind the climbing wall.

Step 4: Add Hanging

Hook

Two small holes drilled in the top, above the climbing cloth, allow me to weave in a bent out paper clip which gives me an easy and convenient way to hang this feeder run in my cages. Of course, you can use string or any other hanging item. The one caution is to beware of placing it near enough to the climbing cloth that it provides a way for the feeder insects to use it to reach the side and escape.



**Now just hang
inside a cage
and watch your
chameleon find its
food!**



Conclusion and Advice

This tutorial shows you how to make a functional Chameleon Feeder Run. It works well for a fun project or if you are maintaining a large number of chameleons. For maintenance, wash them after every usage or just make a new one. The advantage of making items out of a jug that would have just been thrown away any ways is that you can get more use out of it!

One thing to consider, though. If you are creating a centerpiece cage and you have invested time, money, and creativity into the rest of the cage, don't cut corners at the last moment. These plastic feeder runs are functional and fun to make. The chameleons don't care about how it looks. They just like to eat from them! But for your centerpiece cage consider buying a cup from one of the community members that has put in the effort to make one that looks nice. It increases the attractiveness of your cage and it strengthens our community. Have fun with this new project!