

▲▲ NATURE'S MARVELS

Chromatic Marvel The Fascinating Life and Death of Labord's Chameleon

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With a lifespan of just four to five months, this unique species from Madagascar unveils a stunning array of colours controlled by its nervous system, even in its last moments.



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INHABITING the dry and deciduous forests in the lowlands of western Madagascar, Labord's chameleon, scientifically known as *Furcifer labordi*, is known for its distinctive life cycle and remarkable display, even in death.

From its intriguing life cycle to its vibrant exit, Labord's chameleon captivates the interest of researchers and nature enthusiasts. Spending almost eight months of its one-year life span inside the egg, it survives for only four to five months once hatched. This is because it dies almost immediately after reproduction. The distinctive life cycle of the chameleon,

referred to as "semelparity," is presumed to be an adaptation to a combination of extreme climate and competition with other sympatric chameleon species.

With a lifespan of just four to five months, this unique species presents a fascinating array of colours controlled by its nervous system, even in its last moments. Chromatophores, the specialised skin cells, are responsible for this phenomenon. Each chromatophore contains a different type of pigment; some located on the top surface may have yellow or red pigments known as xanthophores or erythrophores, whereas