



## Invading gecko terrifies Taichung motorist 壁虎爬進車 女駕駛花容失色

A Taichung woman with a life-long fear of geckos was almost driven to selling her car when one of the lizards crawled into her BMW 520.

The woman, surnamed Chang, declared war on the gecko and was about to send her car for a thorough cleaning, but was unable to overcome her fear of being in the car with a gecko. She therefore decided to leave the car in the sun for ten days, hoping that the heat would kill the gecko. Still uneasy, she even considered selling her car at a knockdown price. The whereabouts of the gecko was still unknown, leaving her too scared to even drive the car. Her friends tried to reason with her by saying, "Don't let a gecko you can't even see leave you out of pocket like that."

She went to a psychologist to try and get over the shock, but she still couldn't overcome her fear. Finally, she took her car to a mechanic to have the entire engine dismantled. Not until the head mechanic concluded, based on the direction of gecko feces, that the gecko had run away did she give up the notion of selling her car.

A good friend of Ms Chang heard about her experience, and reacted in sheer amazement. It's normal for people to be scared of spiders, cockroaches, rats, snakes and lizards, but this was the first time she'd heard of someone being afraid of geckos like that. To try to help her, friends have gone online to check on her condition. It turns out that Ms Chang is not the only person with this kind of **phobia**, with other people also asking, "What do you do when a gecko crawls into your car?"

Online forums have come up with a myriad of odd solutions. One suggested, "keeping the car doors firmly shut to

suffocate the gecko to death." Another suggested having the car sent in to be washed, or park the car in the sun, open all the doors and the gecko will be forced out by the heat. Others recommended spraying the car with poison. One even proposed buying sticky flypaper, pasting it on the car ceiling, and sticking a few flies on the paper to lure the gecko into the trap.

The immediate reactions on the Internet were comforting, leading Ms Chang to ask the car depot if there were any other experiences like hers. The depot admitted that there were indeed other people who had sent their car to their shop to flush out a gecko. Upon hearing this, she was relieved to know that she wasn't the only person with this kind of phobia.

"There are a lot of stange methods for getting rid of geckos, which don't all work. Generally speaking, having your car cleaned out will do the trick, and if that fails you could open the hood of the car to check the engine," says the head mechanic. A car dealer said that, "even if all four doors of a car are firmly shut, there are still air vents. Humans don't know where these gaps are but geckos have the natural ability to find these passages and crawl out, so there's really no reason to be nervous."

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY WILL VUYLSTEKE)

台中一名從小就怕壁虎的女子發現壁虎跑進她的BMW520轎車後，差點要「廉賣車子」。

這位張小姐於是展開「除壁虎」大戰，她先將車子大美容，未見「壁虎」蹤影，但她無法克服心理障礙，接著把車子「曬」在大太陽下，一連十天不發動，希望把壁虎「曬死、悶死」，這

樣還不放心，最後甚至動念要「廉賣車子」，因為壁虎行蹤不確定，她「不敢開了」；張小姐的友人勸她「別為了一隻看不見的壁虎，跟自己的荷包過不去」。

她也去看了心理醫生，但仍無法克服恐懼，最後她把車開去保養廠整個引擎拆開，修車師傅從「壁虎屎」的排列方向研判「壁虎跑走了」，她才放棄廉賣車子的念頭。

親朋好友聽到張女的經驗，都感到「不可思議」，一般人可能會怕蜘蛛、蟑螂、老鼠、蛇、蜥蜴，但第一次聽到有人怕壁虎怕成這樣，眾人於是幫忙上網查詢對策，發現有不少人和張小姐有相同的「恐懼」，都在詢問「壁虎跑到車子裡去了，怎麼辦？」

網路回應千奇百怪，有人建議「車門緊閉，把壁虎悶死」；有人建議把車送洗；有人說把車子停在大太陽下，打開所有車門，壁虎會因車內太熱而跑走；還有人說噴殺蟲劑，甚至有人建議買粘蒼蠅板，上面粘幾隻蒼蠅放在車頂，壁虎為了吃蒼蠅，就會被粘住。

眼見網路上反應熱烈，張小姐於是詢問車廠有無相關經驗，車廠也表示「的確有人因壁虎跑進車裡」就送車到車廠，她才安心「原來，不是只有我這樣」。

修車師傅說：「『避虎』方法千奇百怪，卻未必正確，一般來說，全車美容就夠了，最多再把引擎蓋打開檢查清楚。」業者說：「車子就算四門緊閉，仍有通氣孔，人類無法察覺，但壁虎自然會找出路，真的不必太緊張。」

(自由時報記者唐在馨)

A mechanic searches a car for geckos, top left, and a pair of geckos hang from a wall. PHOTO: TANG TSAI-HSIN AND HSIEH FENG-CHIU, LIBERTY TIMES

修車師傅在車內翻找壁虎(左上)；一對壁虎懸在天花板上。

照片：自由時報記者唐在馨、謝鳳秋攝

### TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **whereabouts** /'weərə'baʊts/ n.

下落 (xia4 luo4) · 行蹤 (xing2 zong1)

例：The whereabouts of the missing money is still unknown.  
(弄丟的錢還沒下落。)

2. **phobia** /'fɒbiə/ n.

恐懼症 (kong3 ju4 zheng4) · 懼怕 (ju4 pa4)

例：Norman is seeing a hypnotist to overcome his phobia of spiders.  
(為克服對蜘蛛的恐懼，諾曼找上催眠師。)