



# komodo®

## CARE GUIDE

### TORTOISE



**CONGRATULATIONS!** Many tortoise species make great pets and we're sure you'll enjoy each other's company for many years to come. Choosing the correct enclosure and equipment is an important first step. Komodo reptile products are designed to ensure your new reptile pet gets off to a great start.

#### ABOUT PET TORTOISES

Hermann's Tortoises and Horsfield's Tortoises are the most common pet species, and for good reason. Their care is very similar and, after ensuring you have the correct equipment and enclosure, they are relatively easy to keep. The Hermann's originates from Mediterranean Europe and is hardy enough to be kept outdoors for part of the year, specifically during the warmer months. They grow to be around 25cm (10ins) and can live for around 75 years with the right care. The widespread natural range of the Horsfield's Tortoise extends across Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, southern Kazakhstan and Pakistan. They grow to be up to 30cm (12ins) and can live for over 60 years with the right care. Horsfield's Tortoises can be kept outdoors during the warmest months of the year.

#### ENCLOSURES

Enclosures W100xD45xH50cm are suitable for young tortoises up to two or three years of age and can be used to house Horsfield's, Hermann's, Leopard, African Spurred and Redfoot Tortoises.

#### SUBSTRATE

Komodo Tropical Terrain or Komodo Tortoise Eco Terrain are ideal substrates for the base of the vivarium. Add a layer approximately two inches thick and spot clean any soiled areas immediately. Replace the substrate completely every few weeks and be sure to clean and disinfect the enclosure before adding new bedding.

#### HEATING

Tortoises, like all reptiles, need regulate their body temperature by moving between warm and cool areas. Placing heaters at only one end of the habitat will usually create the correct thermal gradient the animal requires. An ideal temperature range would be between 30°C (85°F) at the hot end during the day, with a temperature of up to a maximum of 45°C (114°F) directly under the spot lamp. The cool end should not be less than 21°C (70°F). The Komodo Daylight Bulb provided in the kit is the primary heat and light source. The lamp dome should rest on the screen top of the habitat approximately 1/3 from one end. The heat mat provided in the kit is ideal for providing a secondary heat source for use day and night. The heat mat can easily be positioned inside or outside at the same end as the lamp is placed.

The thermostat included in the kit is for use with the heat mat. **NEVER INSTALL HEAT MATS ON THE FLOOR OF THE ENCLOSURE AND THEN COVER, AND WITH SUBSTRATE.**

#### CONTROL AND MONITORING

Check temperatures using the thermometer on the dual gauge. Komodo Advanced heat mats must be used with a suitable thermostat such as the Komodo On/Off Thermostat provided. Best practice recommends placing a thermometer at both the hot end and the cool end to facilitate regular monitoring of the temperatures. ***Remember that Heat Mats emit infrared heat and thermometers must be in contact with the mat to register the temperature.***

#### SHELTER

Make sure that there are a choice of hides and shelters spanning several parts of the enclosure. Your tortoise should be able to hide away and still have access its preferred part of the thermal gradient.

#### WATER

Tortoises need constant access to clean drinking water in a shallow dish. They also enjoy shallow baths at a tepid temperature which also encourages them to defecate. Clean and disinfect the dish before replenishing with clean water.

#### LIGHTING

Tortoises need a lot of vitamin D3 and Komodo's high powered UVB fluorescent tubes are ideal. Set up an optimum basking spot that allows your animal to get heat and UVB in the same place, ideally 4-15cm from the UVB tube. Adding a reflector shade behind the tube will deflect more light into the enclosure, doubling the UVB available for your animal. Remember to provide areas of shade too. Plants, rocks, hides and shelters will provide different degrees of shade; something that is often overlooked when providing UVB for reptiles. Remember to replace your UVB fluorescent tube every six months as their output diminishes over time. Spotlight bulbs used as a heat source will also light the enclosure during the day time, but be sure to always switch these off at night.

#### ENRICHMENT

Add plenty of plants and shelters. These can be natural or artificial, whichever you like best. Be careful not to create décor that could cause your tortoise to flip over, particularly under the basking area.



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## FEEDING

Tortoises should be offered fresh food twice each day, morning and evening. The food provided with your kit is nutritionally complete for Hermann's and Horsfield's Tortoises. However all species will benefit from daily offerings of suitable greens such as dandelion and coarse grasses or hay. Small quantities of other suitable fruits and vegetables can be offered several times per week depending on the species. Certain fruits and vegetables are not suited for tortoises so be sure to research the specific requirements of your tortoise species before offering new food items. Regularly dust fresh food with the appropriate Komodo tortoise supplement.

## HANDLING

After setting up your new enclosure, leave your tortoise to settle in before attempting to handle it. Do not handle your tortoise for a week.

Assuming the animal is eating and defecating regularly, it is fine to start handling. To lift your tortoise, encircle the shell with your fingers and thumb - two hands may be required for larger animals. Take care to not allow the animal to fall from your hand, but take precautions for this anyway. Hold your animal near to the ground and be ready to restrain them. As with all animal care, thoroughly wash hands after handling your tortoise or cleaning their enclosure.

**IN CONCLUSION**, tortoises are very long-lived active animals. They certainly seem to know their owners and often seem to enjoy interaction with them. To the right are some timely reminders on Tortoise care in the handy format of a checklist:

## Tortoise Checklist

### DAILY

- Clean and refresh water bowl
- Check correct temperatures are being maintained
- Spot clean any waste
- Visually inspect tortoise
- Check and hydrate humid area if required
- Remove uneaten food and replace with fresh food
- Wash hands after servicing habitat or handling tortoise

### EVERY OTHER DAY

- Use calcium supplements
- Provide a shallow bath

### WEEKLY

- Clean glass
- Top up substrate
- Clean any decorative rocks, plants etc.
- Physically inspect tortoise
- Weigh tortoise and record data

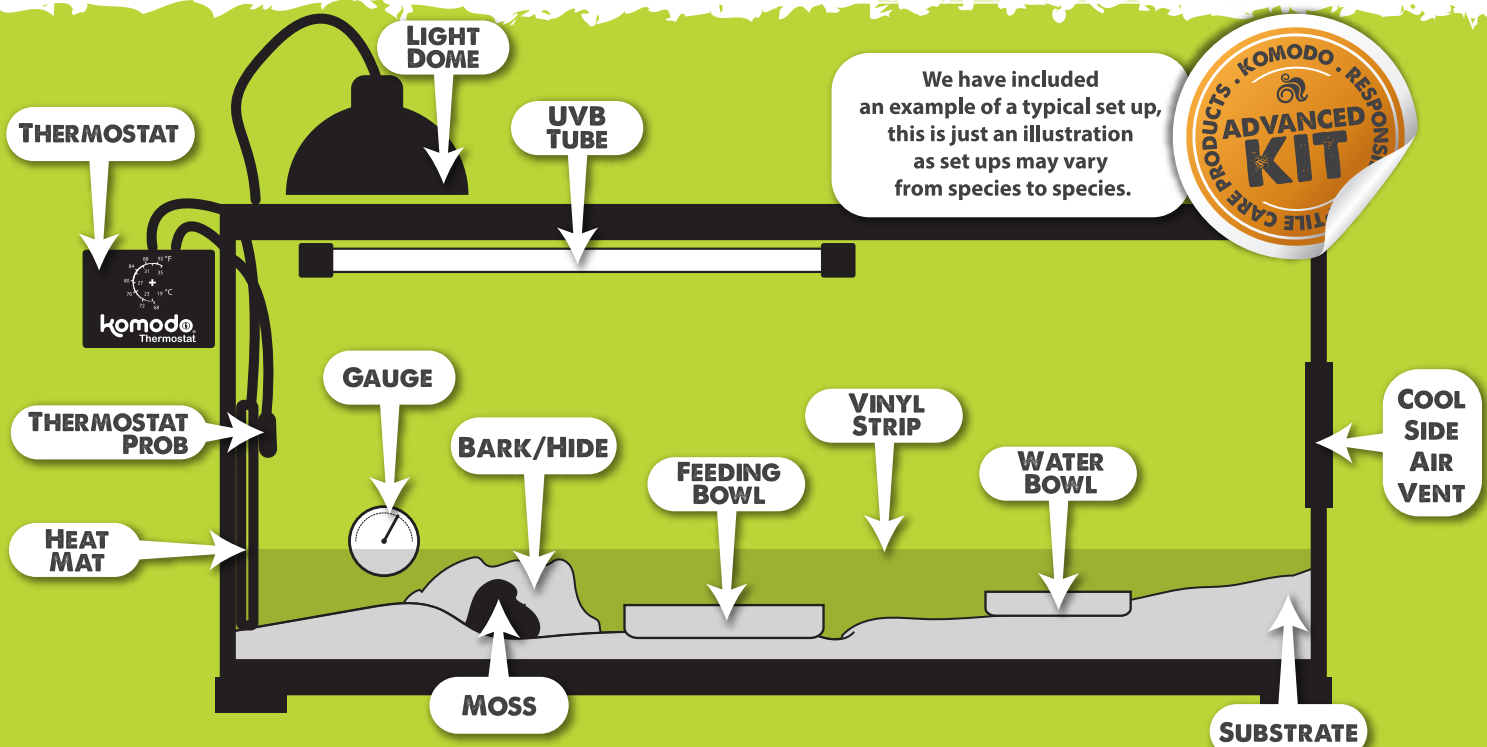
### MONTHLY

- Remove and replace all substrate

### SEMI-ANNUALLY

- Replace Komodo 10% UVB Sun Strip Tube

**NOTE:** This basic wellbeing guide will help to get you started. It highlights the most important information that every keeper needs to know, but new keepers should research the husbandry needs of their animal in detail.



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