



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 hatchling tortoise gets off to a great start.

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

ABOUT PET TORTOISES

Tortoises have a long history of being kept as pets in the UK. The three Mediterranean species (Hermann's, Spur Thighed, Marginated) and the smaller Horsfield's Tortoise are the most commonly kept, and for good reason. They are beautiful, interesting and often very active. Their care is very similar and, after ensuring you have the correct equipment and enclosure, they are relatively easy to keep, although like any pet, there is quite a time commitment. These species are all recommended to be hibernated as they get bigger. Most species will require secure outdoor accommodation as they grow to adulthood which is usually a suitable greenhouse or similar.

HOW TO USE THIS ENCLOSURE

The Ecology Tortoise Habitat and Kit is designed for young tortoises and is recommended to house all of the Mediterranean tortoises plus Horsfield's. It is also suitable for many other young species of tortoise including Leopards, African Spurred and Redfoot and Star Tortoises.

HEATING

Tortoises, like all reptiles, need to regulate their body temperature by moving between warm and cool areas. The Dome Clamp Lamp and Lighting Stand should be assembled and positioned approximately 20 cm from the end opposite to the hide. Placing the 100w basking lamp at only one end of the habitat will usually create the correct thermal gradient the animal requires. The analogue thermometer should be placed near the basking spot to ensure the correct temperature range. An ideal basking temperature range would be between 30°C and 35°C directly under the spot lamp. The opposite end will then normally be 10C to 15C cooler.

Depending on ambient room temperature it may be necessary on occasions to reduce or increase the wattage of the basking spot bulb to maintain the correct basking spot temperature.

The **heat mat** and **thermostat** included in the kit are there to provide a backup safe warm refuge twenty-four hours a day. The heat mat should be placed behind the glass protector in the hide.

The thermostat should be wired to control the heat mat according to the detailed instructions included with both pieces of hardware. When they are both in position the thermostat should be set to maintain a temperature of approximately 20C to 25C. Substrate should never be allowed to build up in front of the heat mat to prevent it becoming thermally blocked.

LIGHTING

Sunlight is the best source of UVB light, which tortoises require along with calcium to ensure proper bone growth and to prevent MBD. The Komodo high powered UVB fluorescent tube provided in the kit is an excellent substitute for sunlight for animals being maintained indoors. Install the fluorescent tube and reflector on the side wall of the habitat near the basking spot to enable your tortoise to be able to sunbathe and receive both the heat from the basking light and the UVB rays from the tube at the same place. 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 the output diminishes over time.

SUBSTRATE

Komodo Tortoise Eco Terrain is an ideal substrate for the base of the vivarium. It provides a natural medium that tortoises can enjoy digging in and it provides excellent thermoregulation properties. Eco Terrain is well suited for establishing an area of higher humidity as well. It can be shaped to provide small hills to climb which helps to develop muscle growth and develop balance in young animals. Add a layer approximately two inches thick and spot clean any soiled areas immediately. As a guide, replace the substrate completely every month and be sure to clean and disinfect the enclosure before adding new bedding.

SHELTER

Arrange the Flexi Stix in the kit to provide a hide at the hot end of the habitat. It is important that a tortoise can choose as part of its overall thermoregulation strategy to be both warm and hidden or cooler and hidden using the built in hide of the habitat. The Komodo Habitat Moss can be positioned inside the Flexi Stik hide to provide a humid retreat. Habitat Moss will need to be refreshed several times a week by spraying it with water.

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.



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FEEDING

Tortoises enjoy grazing and should be offered food at least twice daily, morning and afternoon. The Komodo Tortoise Diet provided within your kit is nutritionally complete for all European species and Horsfield's tortoises. However, all animals will benefit from additional daily offerings of appropriate fresh foods including dandelion and other suitable weeds and greens. 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 Komodo Nutri-Cal supplement.

HANDLING

After setting up your new enclosure, leave your tortoise to settle in for perhaps a week before attempting to handle it. 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. It is an important part of tortoise care to regularly inspect the animal for any signs of problems or ill health. Regular routine handling sessions help ensure the animal is not stressed by such examinations.

IN CONCLUSION, tortoises are very long-lived active animals. They certainly seem to know their owners and often seem to enjoy interaction with them. Most tortoise species will eventually require outdoor accommodation in the form of a greenhouse or other suitable habitat.

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

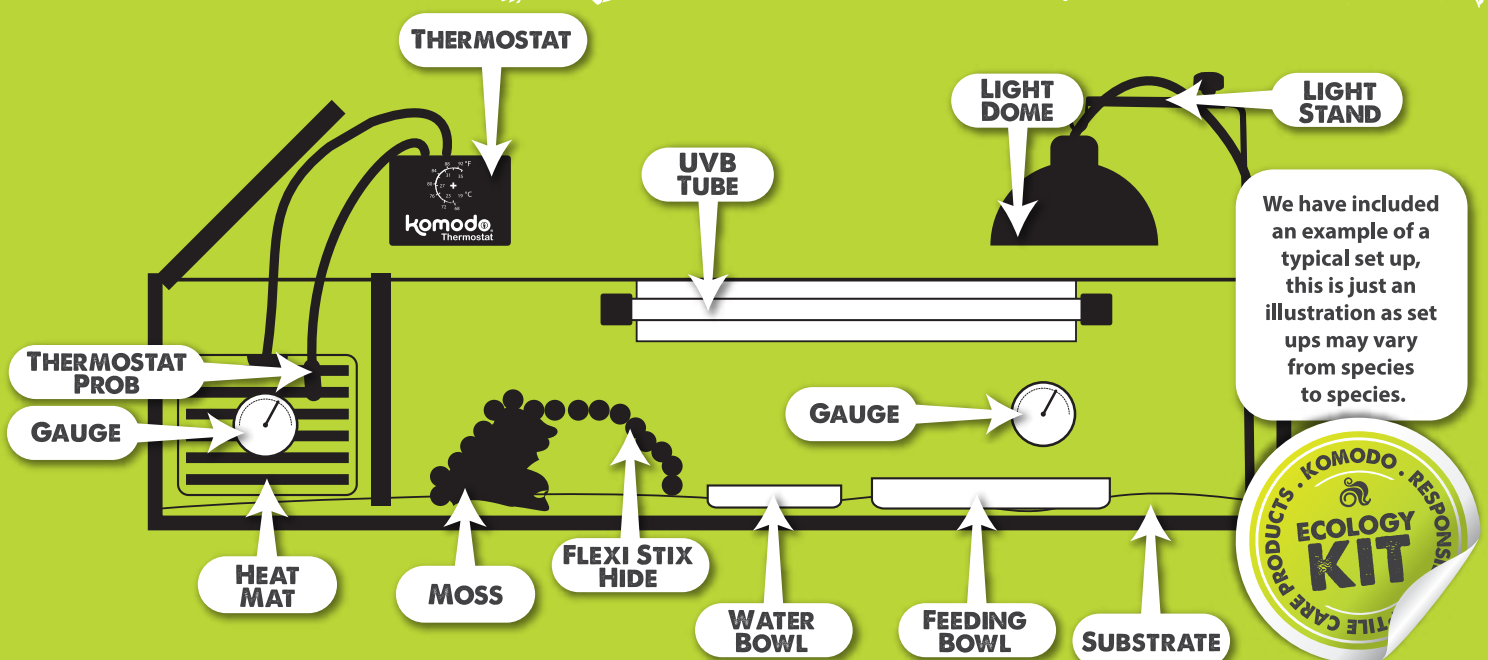
MONTHLY

- Remove and replace all substrate

SEMI-ANNUALLY

- Replace Komodo 10% UVB Sun Strip Tube

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