

OTHER SERVICES:

Health checks

Worried your animal is unwell? Not behaving normally? Or just want to make sure your animal is nice and healthy?

Bring them down to the shop and an experienced member of staff will give your reptile the once over.

Going on holiday?

We run a reptile boarding service so we can look after your pets for you. Ask a member of staff to book your reptile in with us.

Prices? Please enquire.

Need something but can't see it on the shelf?

Look no further... Ask a member of staff and we can try and get the item ordered in for you within 7 days!

A small deposit may be required to secure the order.

This handout should be considered a basic guide. It is essential that with taking on the responsibility of a new pet, you do as much research as possible about the animal, its requirements, and its suitability for you as an owner.



MEDIERRANEAN TORTOISE HERMANN'S, SPUR-THIGHS & MARGINATEDS CARE SHEET



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Fresh water is required daily.

A good quality vitamin, mineral and calcium supplement is necessary to the health and wellbeing of your tortoise. ALWAYS read the packaging carefully. We recommend Reptavite with Earth Pro Calcium Mg at a 1:2 ratio mix twice a week. If this duty is not fulfilled there is a risk of irreversible illness and shell deformities.

Health, Handling and Additional Information:

If you are worried about your animal's health seek advice from a respected dealer and if still in doubt contact a specialist veterinarian. There are a few symptoms to monitor:

- Unusual lethargy
- Prolonged lack or loss of appetite
- Dehydration – eyes sinking into the back of the head
- Cloudy, unclear or sticky eyes
- Discharge from the nose
- Prolonged diarrhoea
- Over grown beak
- Bumpy shell

Tortoises are considered solitary animals as they can become territorial. Under the correct circumstances with the correct sex ratios, then some can live in group scenarios, however, ensure you gather all the necessary advice before doing this. If you decide to purchase a second tortoise, ensure they're of compatible sizes and get equal amounts of food to ensure the same growth rate. Ask a respected dealer for more information.

It is important that you allow your tortoise to settle in before you start handling. **1-2 weeks** is usually sufficient as long as your tortoise is feeding and expressing natural behaviours. Tortoises are naturally good at being handled so there's no need to excessively restrain or handle them as this could cause defensive, aggressive or reclusive behaviours and feelings for your tortoise. Always handle your tortoise near a surface as accidents do happen. Always follow basic hygiene principles after handling your animal.

Your tortoise can only go outside when it is warm and sunny as it is too cold for them otherwise. Ensure they are enclosed with a wire mesh above to stop birds such as magpies and crows from taking your tortoise and mesh on the floor to stop them from digging out. When grazing on the lawn remove one of its meals from the weekly diet.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- A suitably sized wooden vivarium.
- UVB lighting T5 12% to cover 2/3 the length of the vivarium.
- A heat bulb on an appropriate thermostat.
- A broad range calcium and vitamin supplement.

VIVARIUM SET- UP:

We do not recommend using tortoise tables for baby/young tortoises so will not guarantee a baby going into this type of enclosure. When young they are more susceptible to health problems related to poorly controlled temperatures. Tables leave most of the environment at whatever the room's ambient temperature may be, and in a colder house or during colder months your tortoise is only given two options of being too cold to function or basking. We do however accept, there is a large degree of conjecture, and a lot of people have success with this method of housing, we find older more established tortoises fair better in this environment - ask for more information.

Heating

All heat sources should be positioned at the same end of the vivarium to create a hot basking end. This allows for a temperature gradient so that the opposite end is the cool end. Tortoises require a basking spot of 32C, to achieve this use a thermostat and set it to 30C. Place the thermostat probe off centre within the 1/3 of the vivarium that the heat source is. Do NOT ever use a heat mat as a heat source for your tortoise.

Thermostats regulate the temperature for you allowing for a stable and accurate temperature at all times within the vivarium.

A nighttime drop of no less than 18-20C on the cooler side can be beneficial as this is a natural occurrence for them and enables them to be more active during the day. If your house is too cold this is not advised.

The recommended heat bulbs are deep heat projector or a ceramic bulb. In a tortoise table for an established tortoise a Mercury Vapour bulb can be used which emits heat and UVB. For more information on heating please ask.



Do not position your vivarium where there is direct sunlight, a draft or near a radiator. This can affect the thermal gradient.

UVB Lighting

UVB lighting is required for 12-14 hours a day. We recommend the T5 Pro 12% UVB lighting which should be 2/3 the length of the vivarium to create a UVB gradient. The benefits of the T5 range are that the UVB wavelength can reach a further distance with a 12 month virtually guaranteed UVB output. Using a reflector increases the amount of UVB reflected down. If other UVB tubes are used ensure to replace them every 6 months unless the manufacturer advice otherwise.

Failure to provide your new tortoise with the correct levels and quality of UV could result in poor shell development and irreversible metabolic bone disorder (MBD).



The UVB output will continue to degrade even though it will continue to give off light.

Cleaning, Substrate and Furnishings

There are many opinions to what substrate should be used for your tortoise. A good quality beech chip is suggested. Other products include tortoise bedding (type of sand) or orchid bark. Please note that when using a damper substrate to increase ventilation to prevent water damage to your vivarium.

Your tortoise will like using hay / alfalfa for bedding in their hide but also as part of their diet providing the roughage which is an important aspect of a healthy balanced diet. (find out more about their diet in the next section)

The vivarium should be spot cleaned on a regular basis, if done thoroughly a full clean should only need to be done every 4-6 weeks. Ensure you only use disinfectants specifically intended for reptiles. Other products can be toxic.

Ensure décor/furnishings are from a recognized dealer to ensure they're safe for use for your tortoise. Plastic and silk plants can be mistaken for real food, so we advise you don't use these in your vivarium.

Your tortoise will need somewhere to hide. You can put a suitable arched piece of wood or cork to accomplish this. Place the hide centrally in the vivarium.

Diet and Supplementation

Your tortoise is herbivore. We suggest feeding r tortoise every other day. By doing this, you are preventing your tortoise from becoming overly picky with the food you present them and eating a varied diet rather than just eating their favourite bits. Fresh greens make up for 90% of your tortoises diet the other 10% being fruit and vegetables to add colour and flavour. Fresh Greens are always favoured over 'complete pellet diets' however these can accompany as part of a varied diet. When using pellets ensure to only dampen and not saturate with water as we want your animal to fill up on a low water content food. With the vegetables put a sizeable amount in the vivarium in the morning and remove any leftovers in the evening. It is worth remembering that if food is taken from outside that no pesticides or fertilizers have been used. And never feed anything picked from the side of the road due to exhaust fumes. A very informative list of food and their makeup can be found on 'the tortoise table' app and website.

DO NOT FEED THE FOLLOWING:

- Iceburg lettuce and cucumber
- Citrus fruit
- Vegetables with high content of starch such as potatoes
- Tomato seeds or sweet corn as these are indigestible
- Not much cabbage or any other plants of the brassica genus (brussels, broccoli, kale) as these can have large amounts of goitrogen which can effect metabolic processes.
- Not too much spinish, strawberry, tomatoes or any other plant with large amounts of oxalates
- **NEVER PARSLEY, AVOCADO OR RHUBARB**



ADVISED FOOD:

- ✓ Weeds such as dandelions – **ask for some seeds to grow from home**
- ✓ Mustard greens
- ✓ Endives
- ✓ Rocket
- ✓ Watercress
- ✓ Squash
- ✓ Lambs lettuce
- ✓ Green beans
- ✓ Asparagus
- ✓ Herbs such as mint, basil, fennel
- ✓ To add flavour, mango, papaya, bell pepper, apple, kiwi, carrot
- ✓ As an OCCASIONAL TREAT grape, blueberries hibiscus and pansy flowers.



