

Caring for your Uromastyx

Copyright © 2003/2008 – Herp-Titude.com
Updated 4/21/08

We are currently working with; Mali (*U. maliensis*), Somali (*U. mcfadyeni*), Indian (*U. hardwicki*), Ornate (*U. ornata*), Moroccan (*U. acanthinuris*) and Saharan (*U. geryi*) both Red and Yellow phase.

Time to adjust to new surroundings:

When your Uro arrives, have its enclosure “move in” ready before their arrival. Once in the enclosure, just allow it time to adjust to its new surroundings. This can take up to a couple of weeks for some. Continue to feed and clean on a daily basis, but try not to handle it during this time. Refrain from re-arranging their furniture. They need to start feeling a sense of “HOME” and every time you move something, they have to readjust. When you receive your Uro, you could also provide a soak after opening the box upon arrival.

Read below under soaking. We will however soak them the day before shipping them out to you.

Housing:

We use the four foot Vision cages for our paired Uromastyx and use the three foot Vision cages for single animals. Most will say, the bigger the better for Uros. For a single Mali Uro, a good starter set up to begin with would be a 3' x 2' x 18" (minimum size). If you are using glass cages (terrarium type), we suggest putting brown paper or decorator paper on the sides and back of the glass.

Hatchlings: 20 gallon long is more than suitable. They would get lost in anything bigger than that.

Substrate:

We use wild birdseed with NO Sunflower Seeds with our adults. The brand of wild birdseed we use is [KayTee Supreme](#) and can be obtained at most feed stores, PetCo or PetSmart. We use the Finch mix OR Parakeet mixes WITHOUT the Sunflower Seeds. When using birdseed, only fill the bottom of the enclosure ¼ inch deep with the seed. Any deeper than this and it is difficult for the Uro to walk on.

You could also use small alfalfa pellets. The brand of alfalfa pellets we used in the past was by KayTee also. It is a smaller pellet. The only thing about the alfalfa pellets is it gets too dusty (breaks apart) easily.

Fine play sand is an inexpensive and effective choice for substrate if you don't want to use birdseed. This can be obtained at any Lowes or Home Depot.

***Hatchlings: Under 8 months of age, only use paper towels.**

We strongly discourage the use of walnut shell and corncob bedding as a substrate.

Lighting:

A good UVB bulb is essential for your Uro to stay healthy. We use the “[D3 Compact Reptile Lamp](#)” by Arcadia for UVB. Since Uros like it “bright”, we also use a soft compact florescent by FEIT that is 23W.

Repti-Sun 10 is also another good UVB bulb, which comes in florescent (long tube) or compact.

The PowerSun mercury vapor bulbs have high output of UVB like the Arcadia does and it also acts as a basking bulb (2 in 1). It is best to keep the PowerSun bulbs 12” away from the basking area so as to NOT burn the animal.

We keep our lights on 12-14 hours a day.

Basking/Temps:

Uros love them “hot” temps so depending on the time of year will depend on what wattage you will be using. Since we use Vision cages, the basking area is lower to the ground, therefore on the upper cages we can get away with using a 50-watt basking bulb. We use a “temp gun” to check the temperature at the basking area to determine which basking bulb to use. Ideally, you want your basking spot to be between 110 – 125 degrees.

You want the cool end of the enclosure to be in the mid 80's.



Inside one of the Ornata enclosures.

If the temps in your house go below 70 degrees at night, you can (I have done this in the past) affix a small under heat pad to the underside of your enclosure, on a timer to come on only in the evening hours. If your house doesn't go below 70 degrees you should be fine without any additional heat at night. If you use an under heat pad, keep it a couple inches away from where the Uro will be sleeping. Please don't use hot rocks or anything like that.

Hides:

Hides are essential for the well being of your Uro. They need to be able to feel safe and need someplace to retreat to.

For hides you can use several things: medium/large size of cork bark, hut hide, breeder box (Tupperware type), slate positioned over bricks, etc. We like to provide a little of all. Most of our set ups have a 3 gallon Tupperware tub as well as several pieces of grapevine wood and cork bark. We also use slate at the basking area.

Diet:

We feed a mixture of: dandelion greens, escarole and endive daily. We also grow edible flowers; leaves and weeds outside that are pesticide and herbicide free. We don't recommend picking your neighbors flowers though, since you can't be sure if they or someone else sprayed a poisonous product on it. "When in doubt, don't". Some other grocery greens that go good in the salad are; Bok choy, clover and cilantro.

*Sparingly (every couple weeks) you can add: mustard greens, turnip greens or collards.

** Refrain from feeding Spinach and Swiss Chard.

*** If the leaves on your greens are "yellow" don't use it. Use only the green part of the greens when you are feeding.

Hatchlings: Finely chop up greens into ¼ inch pieces, so it is easier for them to eat.

Some toppers for the salad: radicchio, cucumber, hibiscus, shredded carrot, kale (sparingly), optuntia cactus, shredded summer squash (uncooked), summer squash (cooked), pumpkin (cooked), sedum, edible wild flowers.

We cook the squash and pumpkin to where it is soft and slice it into bite size cubes.

I cut up the salad pieces so they are no bigger than an inch or two in diameter, or approximate. I also add shredded squash and shredded carrot a couple times a week and put on top of the salad. Once a week we give them frozen peas (**thawed out**) on top of the greens. I will put the frozen peas in the microwave just long enough to warm them before serving on top of their salad.

**When you use anything frozen, make sure to sprinkle Miner-All Indoor on the thawed food item.*

The snack dish:

We keep a three-inch plant saucer in each enclosure and scoop out some "Tortoise Food" by Rep-Cal. They look like miniature fruit loops, and they are dry. You can obtain these at any pet store. This product is filled with added protein for them as well as nutrients that are good for them. I also keep them dry. We call them "Uro Candies".

For the larger Uros we also put in the "snack dish" dried peas and lentils. They love to snack on all the above.

Hatchlings: Only get the tortoise food in snack dish (not the lentils and peas).



Supplements:

We use [Miner-All Indoor](#) 2-3 times a week as their calcium supplement. Mix in with the salad. Once a week we use a multi-vitamin supplement (Rep-Cal HerpTivite) and mix in with the salad. Anytime you use a supplement it is good to NOT over do. Sprinkle or mix in a small amount.

Recently we started using a new product on the market called Uromastyx Dust by T-Rex. We are getting real good results with this. We mix this in with the salad on the days that we are not using Miner-All or Herp-Tivite.

We realize that some people feed crickets and superworms to their Uros....we don't....even though we have them at hand to do so. The peas that are fed once a week gives them protein as well as the birdseed they are kept on and the tortoise food in their snack dish. So if you are one of those that doesn't want "bugs" in your house, you don't need to add to your expense by keeping those too.

Soaking:

We don't provide water dishes inside the enclosure. The Uro will get what it needs mainly from the food it is eating each day (that great salad you are fixing). BUT, you can soak your Uro once every couple weeks instead. Remember that these guys are not used to having water around.

You can use a tall Sterilite plastic tub or Rubbermaid tub and fill it about a ¼ inch high with "hot" water. Run the water in the faucet and if it feels hot to the touch, but not hot enough to scald you, then it should be OK for the Uro. You don't want to burn them, but they like it hot.

*If you have a hatchling or yearling Uro, make the water depth shallower. You don't want them to drown!

**We also stay in the same room with them while they are soaking.

Soak them for about 10-15 minutes.

Hatchlings: We soak hatchlings once a week.

After the bath, make sure you dry them off real well. Pay extra attention to the quills of their tails. Doing their soak several hours before the lights go out should also give them enough time to dry off before lights go off.

Cage Cleaning:

We clean out the enclosures daily, removing left over food and poops. Every 3 – 4 months we remove all the substrate, hides, etc and wash everything thoroughly with a diluted bleach/water/dish soap solution, then replace with fresh birdseed and so forth.

The solution: (1/4 cup bleach per 1 gallon of water & 1 cap full of dish soap) Make sure to rinse real well with clean water.

Vet Visits:

It is a good idea to have your Uromastyx checked out by an experienced "herp vet". Not all vets are experienced with Uro's, so getting a qualified "herp vet" will come in handy. It would be a good idea to start looking before you need one also. There are a few places on the Internet that do have vets listed and this is a good place to start.

- <http://www.herpvetconnection.com> – Herp Vets listed by State
- <http://www.arav.org/USMembers.htm> – Herp Vets listed by State

Additional Info:

There are many web sites on the Internet that have some very valuable information pertaining to the Uromastyx and there are several books on the market that are well worth it to purchase.

Here are just a few:

Websites:

Deer Fern Farms – <http://www.deerfernfarms.com> - The best site I know of with thorough care information and beautiful examples of the various species.

The Uromastyx Home Page - <http://www.kingsnake.com/uromastyx> – Several care sheets and articles provided by top breeders. Another great source of information.

Books:

Desert Lizards – Captive Husbandry and Propagation by Randall L. Gray

Basic Care of Uromastyx by Phillippe de Vosjoli

Everyone has "their way" of doing things. You will find that you will end up doing things too, that work best for you and the animal you are raising:)

If you need to contact us with any questions or concerns you have, feel free to e-mail us at: sales@herp-titude.com. Most times we can respond to your e-mail within 24 hours.