



## Horsfield's Tortoise

### Overview

- Ease of Care: Beginner
- Size: Average 5-10 inches
- Life Span: Upwards of 75 years
- Diet: Herbivore diet; plants, flowers, weeds, greens, and complementary tortoise food
- Temperament: Friendly
- Basking Area Temp: 30°C to 32°C (86°F-90°F)
- Cool end: 25°C (73°F)

### Equipment Needed

- Housing: Tortoise Vivarium or Tortoise Table
- Heating: 100w Heat Bulb / Mercury Vapour Bulb
- Lighting: UV Tube (Light Cycle: 12 hours of light)
- Substrate: HabiStat Tortoise Bedding, Arcadia EarthMix Arid
- Water: Shallow Water Dish

### Top Tips

- 🔗 Use a water bowl that is not too deep so the Tortoise can easily access and exit
- 🔗 Provide a substrate deep enough to burrow in
- 🔗 Each Tortoise will have a different appetite, so adjust the diet as needed to prevent obesity
- 🔗 Always collect your greens from an organic source
- 🔗 Stimulate your tortoise's senses by offering a variety of foods with different colours and smells
- 🔗 Avoid high protein foods as these will cause rapid shell growth and deformation
- 🔗 Try using a cuttle fish bone to increase calcium intake and help to keep the beak trim
- 🔗 Try soaking your tortoise in lukewarm water a couple of times a week to help keep the tortoise hydrated.

# Housing

As a species they will require a large enclosure throughout their life.

HabiStat Tortoise Table (HSTTO)

Monkfield Standard Vivarium 48x24x24 (DVF4824)

Monkfield Glass-Sided Tortoise Vivarium 48x18x18 (DVGT48)

# Environment

## Heating

The Horsfields Tortoise (*Testudo horsfieldii*) are ectothermic (cold-blooded) animals and take all their heat requirements from external sources.

### Heating a Tortoise Table

To provide an appropriate heat source in a Tortoise Table we recommend using a mercury vapour bulb, which emits heat, light and essential UV rays vital to the tortoise's health and wellbeing.

The mercury vapour bulb (RSMA80E27) can be fitted inside a dome clamp lamp (RART75) which can be hung from the bracket featured on the Tortoise Table.

Our Tortoise Table also features sleeping quarters. We recommend using a thermostatically controlled heat mat (HHM6) as a heat source within the sleeping quarters to provide the Horsfields Tortoise with a warm area to sleep in once the daytime heat source has switched off. The heat mat should be installed onto the roof of the sleeping area using the supplied fittings and glass panel. It should never be on the floor as a tortoise will bury itself to get away from the heat. If your house does not drop below 20°C (68°F) this would not be required.

The heat mat should be used in conjunction with a heat mat thermostat (HTMW1). Heat mat thermostats are designed to regulate temperatures using a thermostat probe (also known as a sensor). Correct placement of the probe is critical to avoid overheating and injury to the tortoise. Insert the probe through the lid opening of the tortoise table sleeping quarters and tape directly to the inside of the wall, roughly halfway between the floor and the roof, adjacent to the heat mat. The probe cable should be taped 2-5cm (1-2") back from the actual probe sensor to allow for a correct temperature reading and avoid it becoming dislodged.

### Heating a Vivarium

To provide an appropriate heat source in a Vivarium, we recommend using a 100w heat bulb that is thermostatically controlled.

The 100w heat bulb should be set up using a ceramic bulb holder (RADCHP), which can be hung from the roof of the vivarium, approximately 15-20cms from one side.

The 100w heat bulb should be used in conjunction with a dimming thermostat (HTDW).

Dimming thermostats are designed to regulate temperatures using a thermostat probe (also known as a sensor). Correct placement of the probe is critical to avoid overheating and injury to the Tortoise. The probe should be positioned on the floor in the basking area and the probe cable should be taped to the floor 2-8cm (1-3") back from the actual probe sensor. This will ensure an accurate temperature reading and prevent the probe becoming dislodged.

Carefully place the substrate on top of the probe cable leaving just the probe above the surface.

A Spotlight Guard should be used to surround the heat bulb to prevent the animal coming into direct contact with the heat source.

### Temperature and Monitoring

As a rough guide, daytime temperatures should be 25°C (77°F) in the cool end, with the hot end up to 30-32°C (86-90°F).

Night-time temperatures should be allowed to drop to 23°C-25°C (74°F-77°F) throughout.

Make sure the temperatures are checked regularly with a 2x probed thermometers (one in both the hot and cooler ends) to ensure that there are no extreme fluctuations.

## Lighting

In the wild, Horsfields Tortoise have access to varied levels of light and UV. They will find shelter during the brightest part of the day so in captivity there should be plenty of hides to allow them to do this.

In captivity, a UV light is essential for a Horsfields Tortoise's health, wellbeing and shell formation. UV lighting should be provided throughout its life and will vary depending on the setup size. For a Tortoise Vivarium we recommend using a UV tube which has been specifically designed for desert dwelling reptiles (RARTP39F). Ensure that the UV light is fitted correctly and securely overhead to avoid any injuries.

No additional UV lighting is required for a tortoise table if a Mercury Vapour bulb (RSMA80E27) is being used, as these provide enough amounts of UV.

## Substrates and Decoration

Personal choice will dictate how you decorate your vivarium, but we recommend the following as a guide:

- 1) Substrates: A dry and non-dusty substrate such as Habistat Tortoise Bedding (HSTB10) & Arcadia EarthMix Arid (RAREA10) that is easy to spot clean.
- 2) Wood and branches on the surface on the table/vivarium will offer physical enrichment and varied texture.
- 3) Live Plants may be used for decoration, but it is highly likely that the tortoise will eat these, so only use plants that are safe for them to eat. Artificial plants must NOT be used as these may be ingested by a hungry tortoise and be detrimental to their health
- 4) A Hide to allow the Horsfields Tortoise to hide away if it chooses to and provides an area to feel safe and secure.

# Diet and Water

The Horsfields Tortoise should be offered greens that have been collected from a renewable organic source and a formulated dry tortoise diet. Food should be offered to young tortoise (up to 3 years old) every day and older tortoise every other day. Tortoise are grazers and will keep coming back during the day to the food source provided for them. Do not worry if they do not eat all the food during their first sitting, instead monitor their daily intake.

A Horsfields Tortoise's diet should be high in fibre, low in protein and contain calcium rich elements. Some of the best food items are:

### Available from most supermarkets

- Baby leaf salads (without iceberg lettuce included)
- Watercress
- Romaine lettuce
- Lambs lettuce
- Rocket leaves

### Collected from an organic source

- Dandelion greens
- White Dead Nettles
- Red or Purple Dead Nettles
- Plantain
- Sow Thistle

This list is purely a guide and we recommend that further research is carried out to compile a range of safe food items to be fed to your tortoise.

Make sure fresh water is always available for the tortoise to drink. Contrary to popular belief tortoise do drink water. The water will need to be changed every day as tortoise will soak and occasionally defecate in the water

# Supplementation

Horsfields Tortoise's need additional supplementation to their diet to help them to flourish and maintain healthy and productive lives. We recommend using a calcium Magnesium mix and a multi-vitamin powder.

# Health & Hygiene

We recommend the following cleaning routine to keep your HorsfieldsTortoise healthy and happy:

	Water	Substrate	Enclosure
Daily	Change old water for fresh water	Spot clean	Check vents on enclosure are not blocked and allow air to pass through freely
Weekly	Disinfect water bowl or dish	Agitate substrate to prevent any bacterial build-up and remove any dirty bedding	Wipe down glass with a reptile safe disinfectant
Monthly		Full substrate change	Wipe down inside the enclosure and décor with a reptile safe disinfectant

Always wash your hands, surfaces and equipment with warm water and disinfectant immediately before and after handling your Horsfields Tortoise, their enclosure and any other equipment.

# Additional Information

Tortoise possess a tough horny beak instead of teeth. This can be quite sharp with some tortoise so take care not to put your fingers too close.

A group of tortoise is called a "creep".

Each section of a tortoise's shell is called a scute, the amount of scutes a tortoise has stays the same throughout its whole life and they grow with the rest of the tortoise.