Tropical®

GB

# TERRARIUM GUIDE

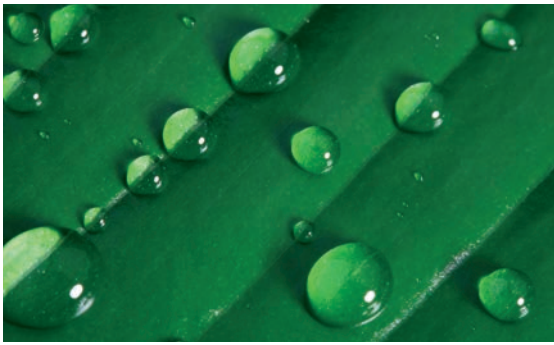
### Tropical tip

Numerous species of reptiles offered on the market have been legally protected due to the danger of extinction. Some animals cannot be sold without proper documents certifying their legal sources. If you plan to buy such species, check which conditions must be met in your country in order to become a happy owner. You will find all the details at: www.cites.org, www.iucn.org.

Tropical has been present on the Polish and global markets for more than 35 years. This vast experience in developing feed's formulas allowed us to create a wide range of foods for reptiles. The offer includes not only prepared foods in the form of granules but also an interesting line of natural foods – dried and freeze-dried, supplemented with reptile care products and substrata for terrarium.

To show you how to make the best of our products we have prepared special Terrarium Guide. Note, however, that this brochure has not be intended as a textbook. It will not answer all the questions of those planning to start their own terraria, but only touch on selected problems. Beginners can then explore the issues on their own, using professional literature and dedicated websites. Extra care should be paid to the legal regulations.

# TERRARIUM GUIDE



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# 1. Introduction

The leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*)

Reptiles are live reminders of times when the Earth was ruled by dinosaurs. Contemporary turtles, lizards and snakes are cherished for their exceptional look, attractive coloration and interesting habits. However, one should remember that inhabitants of the terrarium hardly make true pets. Although some may be tamed, you cannot expect to form a strong bond with a reptile. You will not teach it to play any tricks or respond to its name. If future owners of the turtle, lizard or snake are fully aware of this and will not expect animal's devotion, they will avoid disappointment to fully enjoy an exceptionally interesting world of the terrarium.
Before you buy your dream species, you should get to know its living conditions. This knowledge shall help you to prepare the terrarium and buy necessary accessories. It's best to start with species known for their high immunity and low nutritional requirements such as: Corn Snake, African House Snake, Leopard Gecko, Inland Bearded Dragon, Chinese Water Dragon, Iguana, Carolina Anole, Pond Slider etc. The best idea is to buy the animal from a reliable pet shop or directly from the breeder recommended by other hobbyists. This way you will not have to bother about poor health condition of your pet or start your adventure with struggling to fight a disease.

The Carolina anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

**Possible symptoms of the disease:**

- emaciation
- fatness
- parasites (e.g.: saprophyte)
- the lack of response to the surroundings
- dirt around cloaca
- inflamed skin
- sunken eyes

# 2. Preparing the terrarium

The central bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*)

Young green iguana (*Iguana iguana*)

The veiled chameleon (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*)

Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*)

If you have decided which reptile is going to live under your roof and obtained necessary knowledge, you can start arranging proper terrarium. Choose the size of terrarium on the basis of the size and mobility of its future inhabitants. For animals living on trees choose vertical terrarium, so that you can easily insert branches and limbs etc. Make sure the arrangement allows for convenient cleaning. Ensure a quiet, cosy place where your animal can hide and where you can observe it. It should be easily accessible in case of disease. Most types of terraria require different temperature zones so that these cold blooded animals can regulate their internal temperature.

## 2.1. Desert terrarium

Desert terraria, also called dried, are very easy to maintain. You arrange them with sand (sometimes combined with clay), fine gravel, pebbles and roots with succulent plants to vary the surrounding. Avoid plants with thorns, which are very dangerous to animals. In terraria of this type it's extremely important to ensure various temperature zones. Efficient ventilation is equally important.

The leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*)

The Carolina anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

## 2.2. Rainforest terrarium

You can recreate a real tropical jungle in your terrarium. You will need a small container of water, waterfall or automatic sprinkler (manual water spraying and a small tray with water will be enough only in case of very small tanks). Live plants are a must. Note that keeping them in good shape may be hard in case of some species of reptiles. As litter and substrate one can use special coconut substratum – **Bioterra** or **Cocochips**.

**Bioterra** is a natural substrate made of crumbled coconut fibre and free from any chemical additives, which guarantees safety of use in terraria with even most delicate animals. **Bioterra** has a shape of a compressed brick of natural coconut fibre. It should be soaked in 3-4 litres of water. Its volume will expand to 8-9 litres, making a delicate and moist substrate to be used in terraria with amphibians and reptiles from tropical rainforests as well as in insectaria. It can be used independently and as a supplementation of other terrarium substrates. **Bioterra** is also a perfect soil-loosening ingredient for potting media for plants.

**Cocochips** is a natural substrate made of coconut chips and free from any chemical additives, which guarantees safety of use in terraria with even most delicate animals. **Cocochips** has a shape of a compressed brick of natural coconut fibre. It should be soaked in 3-4 litres of water. The result will be moist substrate (about 4 l) to be used in terraria with amphibians and reptiles from tropical rainforests as well as in insectaria. It can be used independently and as a supplementation of other terrarium substrates. **Cocochips** is also a potting medium for tropical plant culture (particularly epiphytic plants).

The false map turtle (*Graptemys pseudogeographica*)

## 2.3. Aqua-terrarium

It's basically an aquarium with areas of land, the latter depending upon the needs of specific species. While some animals spend most of their time in water, others like to warm themselves on the land. Regardless of the preferences of specific species, you need to ensure a convenient exit route (not too steep or too slippy). It's equally important to ensure clean water by using proper and efficient aquarium filters. The water must be changed frequently, so it's worth considering making outlet holes, which will help you to drain water from the tank; and using conditioners for tap water or agents with bacteria, which accelerate the decomposition of organic wastes.

The African clawed frog (*Xenopus laevis*)

# 3. Basic rules of proper care of the reptiles

Chinese water dragon (*Physignathus cocincinus*)

Most reptiles' health problems are caused by bad care, and most of all – bad diet. That is why it is so important to know your animals' needs – the mistakes you make may have dangerous and irreparable consequences. Apart from bad diet, another common sin of many owners is letting the animal move freely around the flat. This often leads to mechanical injuries, cold, deformation of the limbs (slippy floor), and even food poisoning. Animals kept in the terrarium will suffer if their owner fails to ensure suitable temperature, humidity or proper hygiene. Following these basic rules of proper care, you shall enjoy healthy animals for many years.

# 4. Feeding of reptiles

## 4.1. Green iguana (*Iguana iguana*)

Green iguana (*Iguana iguana*)

Iguana is a lizard, which grows to averagely 1.5 metres in length. The youngsters have attractive, bright green coloration, can be easily tamed and show trust toward their owners. All these make iguana a very popular choice among terrarium owners. In nature green iguana feeds mostly on leaves and flowers. You must not forget about them when composing iguana's diet. Especially for these herbivorous lizards we have developed sticks with high content of selected ingredients of plant origin – **Iguana Sticks**. They are intended for everyday feeding of adult green iguanas. For their production we have used only raw materials of the best quality.

When developing the formula, we also paid attention to the proper level of calcium, phosphorus and vitamin $D_3$, which are responsible for proper skeletal development. We have prepared separate products for reptiles of different age: **Iguana Baby Sticks** (for young iguanas – up to 2.5 years of age) and **Iguana Sticks** (for adult iguanas). Vitamins and trace elements contained in both foods ensure reptiles' excellent health and condition.

### Tropical tip

If your iguana refuses to take prepared food, you can soak **Iguana Sticks** and **Iguana Baby Sticks** in water before feeding or crumble them and pour the powder onto the live food.

## 4.2. Tortoises

Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*)

The most popular species found in terraria are: Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*), marginated tortoise (*Testudo marginata*) and Russian tortoise (*Testudo horsfieldii*). Their diet is based mostly on ingredients of plant origin. To meet their nutritional needs we have developed **Biorept L** – multi-ingredient sticks for everyday feeding. Properly formulated combination of selected raw materials, mostly of plant origin, satisfies all tortoises' nutritional requirements. Due to its excellent flavour the sticks are eagerly eaten. A wide variety of vitamins and trace elements ensure proper skeletal and shell development, preventing deformations and other serious health problems.

Greek tortoise (*Testudo graeca*)

## 4.3. Semi-aquatic and aquatic turtles

Florida redbelly turtle (*Pseudemys nelsoni*)

In terraria one will find ornamental turtles, softshells, river cooters, northern red-bellied turtles, stinkpots, African helmeted turtles and Seychelles mud turtles. They are mostly omnivorous or carnivorous. To satisfy their needs we have prepared **Biorept W** – multi-ingredient sticks for everyday feeding. Contains the addition of crustaceans, including Gammarus, which enriches the food with valuable protein, chitin and unsaturated fatty acids (Omega-3 and Omega-6).

Due to its excellent flavour the sticks are eagerly eaten by the turtles. A wide variety of vitamins and trace elements ensure proper skeletal and shell development, preventing deformations and other serious health problems. Regular feeding with **Biorept W** guarantees steady development and excellent condition.

*Emydura* tortoise

The diet of semi-aquatic and aquatic turtles can be supplemented with dried foods or freeze-dried foods from Natural Line for reptiles (see the table at page 12-13). Pay attention to our special food **Vitarept** – a mixture of tasty shrimps rich in protein with nutritional and enriched with valuable algae: tablets and sticks.

# 4.4. Natural foods for reptiles

| NAME | COMPOSITION | PROPERTIES |
|---|---|---|
| | **Dried foods** | |
| Dafnia Vitaminized | dried *Daphnia pulex* | – the source of macronutrients and trace elements<br>– chitin regulates digestion<br>– food provides properly balanced vitamins |
| Dried Fish | dried fish | – nutritional value of fresh fish<br>– high palatability |
| Crickets | dried crickets (*Acheta domesticus*) | – nutritional value of fresh crickets<br>– chitin regulates digestion |
| Meal Worms | dried mealworms (*Tenebrio molitor*) | – natural, high-energetic food for reptiles<br>– the source of easily digestible protein |
| Gammarus | dried *Gammarus pulex* | – natural food for reptiles<br>– the source of macronutrients and trace elements<br>– chitin regulates digestion<br>– beta-carotene enhances immunity and numerous bodily functions |
| Gammarus & Shrimps Mix | dried *Gammarus pulex* and shrimps | – natural food for reptiles<br>– the source of macronutrients and trace elements<br>– chitin regulates digestion<br>– beta-carotene and other natural carotenoids enhance immunity and numerous bodily functions |

| NAME | COMPOSITION | PROPERTIES |
|---|---|---|
| **Freeze-dried foods** | | |
| FD Blood Worms | freeze-dried bloodworms (*Chironomus*) | – nutritional value of fresh bloodworms<br>– the source of easily digestible protein<br>– free from pathogens (freeze-drying technique destroys pathogens) |
| FD River Shrimp | freeze-dried river shrimps | – nutritional value of fresh shrimps<br>– high palatability<br>– chitin regulates digestion |
| **Multi-ingredient food** | | |
| Vitarept | multi-ingredient food with shrimps for semi-aquatic and aquatic turtles | – the mixture of tasty and rich in protein shrimps, nutritional tablets and sticks rich in valuable algae<br>– provides turtles with a variety of nutrients<br>– contains property balanced macronutrients and trace elements<br>– excellent flavour encourages animals to feed |

The most common problem in feeding carnivorous reptiles is owner's limited access to animal food (live or frozen). That's why he or she must have convenient and easily stored dried or freeze-dried food always at hand.

Schneider's skink (*Eumeces schneideri*)

# 5. Dietary supplements for reptiles

No matter how hard they try, owners cannot supply their terraria with foods as rich in minerals and vitamins as the foods reptiles get in their natural environment. Plants and animals typical for reptiles' natural habitat are hardly accessible so the owners must use their equivalents, which don't always satisfy reptiles' demands for nutrients, vitamins, macronutrients and trace elements. The access to solar radiation is equally important. Not only does the sunlight provide life-giving warmth but also allows for production of vitamin $D_3$, responsible for calcium-phosphate homeostasis. In terrarium it's not always possible to guarantee sufficient length and quality of radiation to ensure production of satisfactory amount of this vitamin, hence the importance of supplementing the diet with indispensable vitamins and minerals.

To help you take care of your reptile, we have created **Vigorept** – modern, vitamin-mineral powder with beta-glucan. It easily sticks to the food, including the insects, which makes application very easy. If used regularly, it ensures proper growth and development of reptiles, prevents shell deformations and other dangerous effects of calcium and phosphorus deficiencies. Vitamin $D_3$ regulates calcium-phosphate metabolism. The remaining vitamins present in **Vigorept** ensure excellent condition, including healthy looking skin, especially during moulting period. Natural immune stimulator – beta-glucan stimulates the immunity system, increases the resistance to diseases and the ability to fight infections.

*Geochelone pardalis*

# 6. Care products for reptiles

## 6.1. Sanirept

The most characteristic element of turtle's body, and most eye-catching at the same time, is the shell, which protects the body from external factors. As it reflects overall condition of the turtle, its look is very important to the owner. Bad diet, vitamin and mineral deficiencies and kidney disorders cause irreparable deformations of the shell. To ensure healthy shell, two main conditions must be met: proper living conditions ensured (clean and spacious terrarium, proper humidity, temperature and lightning) and varied diet rich in calcium and vitamin $D_3$ provided. The shell should also be kept clean. After each bath we recommended oiling it with **Sanirept** with caryophyllus oil. The shell will remain glossy and healthy looking. Caryophyllus oil cares for the tortoises' shell, removes the impurities and offers a refreshing effect.

The Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*)

# 6.2. Ophtalvit-A Chelonia

Green iguana (*Iguana iguana*)

The central bearded dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*)

Madagascar day gecko (*Phelsuma madagascariensis*)

**Ophtalvit-A Chelonia**, a herbal lavender-eyebright balm for reptiles' eyes and skin is an innovative product by Tropical. Its formula uses very well substantiated properties of two medicinal plants: common eyebright and lavender. Inconspicuous eyebright is a repository of valuable biologically active substances. It contains phenolic acids, tannins and aucubin, and its active substances act as anti-inflammatory and bacteriostatic agents and additionally strengthen blood vessels, preventing bleeding in the retina. This medicinal herb has been used in domestic medicine for ages and nowadays is a component of numerous cosmetics and medications intended to treat various eye problems. Active substances of lavender have anti-inflammatory effect and accelerate the regeneration of epidermis. Thanks to combining the extracts of those two plants in **Ophtalvit-A Chelonia**, Tropical has produced a high quality balm to treat reptiles' eyes, especially when they are irritated by dust or sand. Moreover, **Ophtalvit-A Chelonia** can be used to treat skin abrasions and injuries.

# 7. Mexican salamander (*Ambystoma mexicanum*)

Mexican salamander – Albino

Mexican salamander, also known as axolotl, is an amphibian known for neoteny – the larval ability to reproduce. Mexican salamander stays as a larval form throughout all of its life, never reaching maturity, but reproducing nevertheless.

In nature axolotl used to live in two lakes: Xochimilco and Chalco, at the height of 2300 metres above the sea level. Now its environment has been limited to Xochimilco and surrounding swamps. Wild forms have a body in the shades of brown. Amateur breeders usually keep leucistic form (cream white body and dark eyes) and Albino (cream white body and red eyes). In nature axolotls hunt for tiny aquatic animals (mostly insects), but will also accept fish and amphibians. In aquaria they are usually fed with bloodworms, Tubifex, earthworms, frozen fish and crustaceans.

For Mexican salamander we have prepared **Axolotl Sticks** – sinking sticks containing fish, molluscs and crustaceans, which are the source of high quality easily assimilable protein. Optimally balanced composition of vitamins and trace elements ensures proper growth and development of animals, and the addition of astaxanthin and pepper extract intensifies their coloration. Natural immune stimulator – beta-glucan, improves amphibians' immunity system, facilitating recovery processes in amphibians, who have been bitten by other inhabitants of the tank. **Axolotl Sticks** can be used in feeding Iberian ribbed newt, African clawed frogs and other aquatic amphibians.

Mexican salamander (*Ambystoma mexicanum*)

# 8. Notostracans (*Triops* spp.)

Notostracans from the genus *Triops* are small freshwater crustaceans. They live in temporary water bodies all over the globe. Their interesting reproduction process, exceptional look and easy care earned them many lovers, also among younger generation. To make their feeding easier we have prepared multi-ingredient food **Triops** in the form of tiny, sinking granules. Their diversified formula, with high share of protein from fish and aquatic invertebrates, provides all necessary nutrients. Beta-glucan enhances notostracans' natural immunity and properly balanced ingredients ensure their proper growth and development.

If you have any questions about feeding or caring for reptiles,
contact our expert by e-mail: **terrarium@tropical.pl**

The address of your shop:

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