

## Indian Star Tortoise – Care Sheet

### Temperature

Day	24-28 °C
Basking area temperature	30-32 °C
Night	22 °C (essential temps never dip lower than 20 °C)

### Substrate

50:50 organic/unfertilised top soil and play-pit sand, (soil depth: approx. height of the shell, e.g 1-3" deep for hatchlings, 6"+ deep for adults).

Lightly mist substrate daily to prevent it becoming dusty, help with humidity and thermoregulation.

Change substrate every 4-6 weeks

Recommend having a hide/half log with damp sphagnum moss inside to create a humid hide area

### Food

50% of diet to be made up of:

Grasses (free from chemicals/weed killer etc) e.g. orchard, meadow, timothy, lawn

Hay e.g. orchard, meadow, timothy (2<sup>nd</sup> cut of hay is softer, has less spiky heads, more fibre than other cuts – go to horse feed suppliers as cheaper & farmer will know hay mix)

50% of diet to be made up of tortoise-safe weeds/flowers e.g.:

*weeds: dandelion, plantain, hawksbeard, mallow, sowthistle*

*flowers: pansy, campanula, forget-me-knot, african violet, hibiscus*

salad mixes (when weeds unavailable in frosty spells): Lambs leaf, florette crispy salad mix (green or pink label).

(see 'useful websites' section for more info on what is safe to feed)

*NOTE: offer the equivalent of ¼ the size of the actual tortoise in food, once a day (per tortoise); in warmer months they won't need as much as they will be grazing on grasses, weeds*

### Food supplements

¼ teaspoon of limestone/calcium supplement on food every other day (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri)

¼ teaspoon of Nutrobal on food alternate days to limestone/calcium (e.g. Tue/Thu/Sat)

Leave one day free (e.g. Sun)

Leave Cuttlefish (whole) in the enclosure for tortoise to nibble on for extra calcium

### Water

Provide fresh water daily (in a shallow water dish that they can easily step in/out of)

### Bathing

Frequency:

0-1 year: Every other day for 10 minutes;

1-2 years: twice per week for 20 minutes;

2+ years: once a week for 30 minutes;

Shallow bath (¼ height of tortoise) in lukewarm water (30-32°C). Ideally in the morning, before food.

### Basking and UVB

UVB is vital for the health of your tortoise

- Use a combined UVA + UVB bulb for the basking area.
- Turn on basking bulb for 12 hours per day (summer); 8 hours per day (winter).
- Make sure the tortoise is unable to touch the bulb to prevent burning/overheating (bulb should be approx 30cm away from top of the shell, depending on manufacturer's instructions).
- Replace bulbs every 6-12 months as UVB degrades and no longer beneficial to your tortoise

### Weighing

Weigh weekly before their bath and keep a record of the weight. Weight should gradually increase each week (0-2g for 0-2 years).



Instagram: @happytortoises



YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/happytortoises>

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**Disinfectant/cleaning**

Clean all feeding / drinking trays daily and enclosure weekly with hot water and tortoise-safe disinfectant (e.g. “F10 disinfectant”).

**Housing/habitat**

- Hatchlings/ Juveniles can be housed indoors in open-topped tub with correct heating (never in a vivarium as they can overheat and have poor air quality/limited air circulation). Access to sunshine is important for their health and for growing strong bones and shell, so they should also have a suitable predator-proof outdoor enclosure BUT only when temperatures permit.
- Sub-adult/Adults can be housed in a heated shed or greenhouse with access to secure grassy area to encourage natural grazing and give them the all-important sunshine to keep them healthy and bones/shell strong.
- *Note: tortoises need lots of space, so allow at least 10x the length of your tortoise to calculate the length and width of the enclosure. E.g. a tortoise that’s 10” long would need an enclosure that’s 100” x 100” (minimum)*

**Worming**

Worm your tortoise yearly or as directed by a vet

**Vets**

Make sure your vet is a reptile specialist

**Hibernation**

Indian Star tortoises **DO NOT** hibernate

**Daily checklist**

Below is an example of my daily routine checklist for hatchlings (excludes bathing, weighing, worming, changing substrate)

**HATCHLINGS - MORNING CHECKLIST**

Spot clean urine/faeces	
Turn basking lamp/lighting on	
Roughly chop weeds/food (bite size)	
Rinse food in clean water	
<i>**Mix in softened fibre/dried herbs/flower mix</i>	
Place food in bowl and lightly dust with Calcidust/Limestone/Nutrobal	
Put fresh water in shallow water dish	
Lightly spray substrate	
Rehydrate sphagnum moss in humid hide	

**HATCHLINGS - EVENING CHECKLIST**

Spot clean urine/faeces	
Turn basking lamp/lighting off	
Throw away uneaten food	
Remove & disinfect food/water bowls	

*\*\*I use Zoo Med Grassland Tortoise Food, pre-alpin Testudo fibre and herb mix, dried flowers/dandelions etc as additional supplement to food when natural supplies are limited, but fresh food is always best ☺*

**Useful websites**

- Safe plants/weeds [http://www.thetortoisetable.org.uk/site/tortoise\\_home\\_1.asp](http://www.thetortoisetable.org.uk/site/tortoise_home_1.asp)
- Tortoise care <http://www.tortoisetrust.org/care/care.html>
- <http://www.britishcheloniagroup.org.uk/>
- Weeds/seeds/supplements <http://www.happytortoises.com/>
- Equipment <http://www.happytortoises.com/>



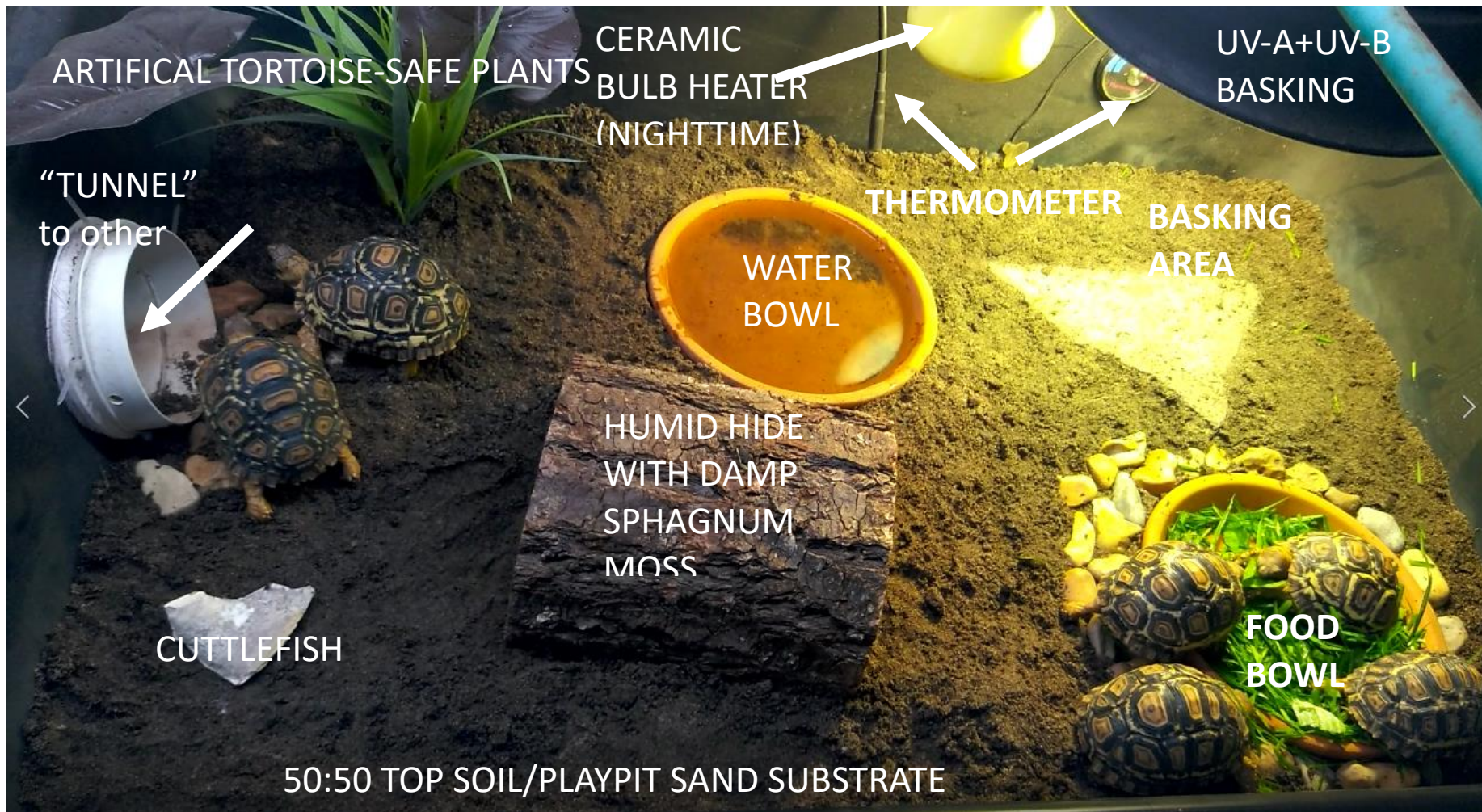
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Example of hatchling indoor area using builders mixing tubs joined together (items in tub should be away from edges to prevent climbing and injury)



NB: Above shows an example of one of my hatchling leopard tortoise setups. The identical setup is also suitable for Indian Star tortoises.



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