

Leopard 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

70% 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 (2nd 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)

30% 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 tortoise in food, once a day (per tortoise); in warmer months they won't need as much as they will be outside 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>

©2017 Sharon Pavoni. All rights reserved.

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: Leopard 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 1ft long would need an enclosure that’s 10ft x 10ft (minimum)*

Worming

Worm your tortoise yearly or as directed by a vet

Vets

Make sure your vet is a reptile specialist

Hibernation

Leopard 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
- 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/>



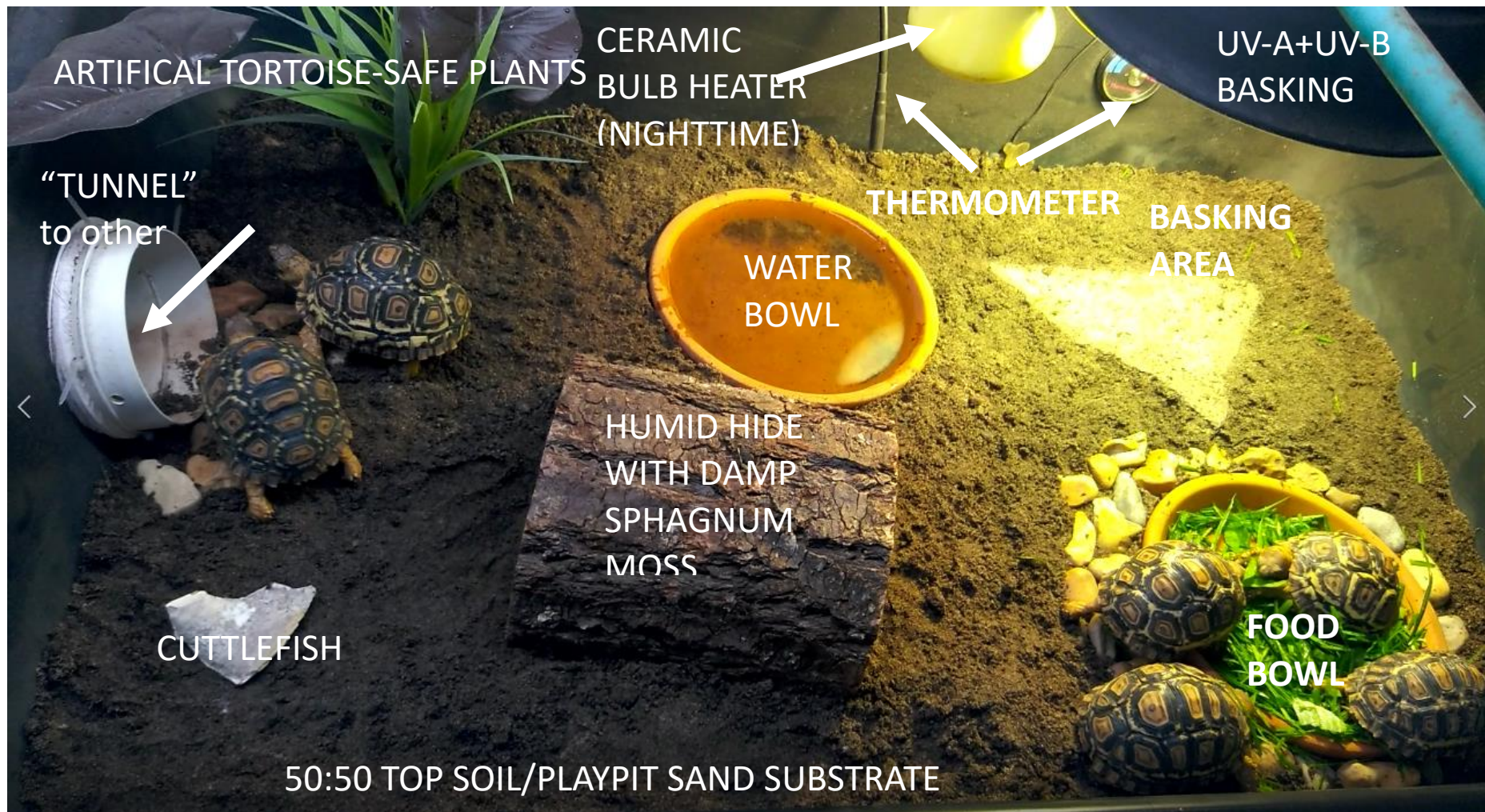
Instagram: @happytortoises



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

Leopard Tortoise – Care Sheet

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



Instagram: @happytortoises



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

©2017 Sharon Pavoni. All rights reserved.

Leopard Tortoise – Care Sheet

Example of hatchling outdoor area with plenty of grass & tortoise safe weeds/flowers. Hatchlings and juveniles should only go outdoors when temperatures are above 20°C



Instagram: @happytortoises



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