



Mediterranean Tortoise

Overview

- Ease of Care: Beginner
- Adult Size: 20-35cm (Marginated tortoise up to 35cm)
- Life Span: Up to 80 years+
- Diet: Greens and Dry Food
- Temperament: Friendly
- Background Temp: 25.5-29.4°C (78-85°F)
- HOT Spot: 30-33.3°C (86-92°F)

Equipment Needed

- Housing: Tortoise Table or Tortoise Vivarium
- Heating: Mercury Vapour or Ceramic Heat Bulb
- Lighting: UV Tube (Light Cycle: 12 hours of light)
- Substrate: Bioactive, Tortoise Bedding or Repti-Turf
- Water: Water Dish

Top Tips

- 📌 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

A Tortoise Table or Tortoise Vivarium is the perfect housing solution for a Mediterranean Tortoise throughout its whole life.

Juvenile Mediterranean Tortoise:

Monkfield Tortoise Table, L109 x D61 x H22cm (43 x 24 x 9")
(DVTT/DVTTBL)

Monkfield Glass-Sided Tortoise Vivarium, L122 x D46 x H46cm (48 x 18 x 18")
(DVGT48)

Adult Mediterranean Tortoise:

Monkfield Tortoise Table, L109 x D61 x H61cm (43 x 24 x 9")
(DVTT)

Monkfield Glass-Sided Tortoise Vivarium, L122 x D46 x H46cm (48 x 18 x 18")
(DVGT48)

Environment

Heating

Mediterranean Tortoise are ectothermic (cold-blooded), taking all of their heat requirements from external sources in the wild. They are naturally exposed to high temperatures which help the tortoise to function normally and digest plant matter.

Mediterranean Tortoise are a group of tortoise species residing across France, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Greece, Russia and areas of northern Africa.

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 can be fitted inside a dome clamp lamp fitting which can be hung from the bracket featured on the Tortoise Table.

Our Tortoise Table also features a sleeping quarters. We recommend using a thermostatically controlled heat mat as a heat source within the sleeping quarters to give the Mediterranean Tortoise 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. 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 Tortoise Vivarium

To provide an appropriate heat source in a Tortoise Vivarium we recommend using a ceramic heat bulb that is thermostatically controlled. The ceramic heat bulb should be set up using a ceramic bulb holder, which can be hung from the roof of the vivarium, approximately 15-20cms from one side.

The ceramic heat bulb should be used in conjunction with a pulse thermostat.

Pulse 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 can be used to surround the ceramic heat bulb to prevent the animal coming into direct contact with the heat source but in the case of a tortoise this is not normally necessary.

Temperature and Monitoring

As a rough guide, daytime temperatures should average between 25.5-33.3°C (78-92°F) with the hot spot being 30-33.3°C (86.92°F) going down to 25.5°C (78°F) at the cooler end of the enclosure.

Night-time temperatures should not be allowed to drop lower than 20-22°C (68-71.6°F), unless the tortoise is to be hibernated.

Make sure temperatures are checked regularly to ensure that there are no extreme fluctuations.

Lighting

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

In captivity, a UV light is essential for a Mediterranean Tortoise's health, wellbeing and shell formation. For a Tortoise Vivarium we recommend using a UV tube which has been specifically designed for desert dwelling reptiles. Ensure that the UV light is fitted correctly and securely to avoid it falling on to the tortoise or it breaking and presenting a hazard. No additional UV lighting is required for a tortoise table if a Mercury Vapour bulb is being used as these provide sufficient amounts of UV.

Substrates and Decoration

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

- 1) Substrates: A substrate such as Bioactive, Tortoise Bedding or Repti-Floor that is easy to spot clean.
- 2) Wood for hiding under and climbing on.
- 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) Hide to allow the tortoise to hide away if it chooses to and give it an area to feel safe and secure.

Diet and Water

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 as such will keep coming back during the day to the food source provided for them. Do not worry if they do not eat all of the food during their first sitting, instead monitor their daily intake.

A Mediterranean Tortoise's diet should be high in fibre, low in protein and contain calcium rich elements. Some of the best food items to feed 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
- Broadleaf 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 as 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

Mediterranean Tortoise 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 Tarantula 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 to allow any dirty bedding to be removed	Wipe down glass with a reptile safe disinfectant
Monthly		Take out old substrate and replace with new substrate	Wipe down inside the enclosure and disinfect décor with a reptile safe disinfectant

Always wash your hands, surfaces and equipment with warm water and disinfectant immediately before and after handling your spider, 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 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.