

Mali Uromastyx

Uromastyx Dispar Maliensis

Mali Uromastyx are one of the most popular species of this genus. With their bold personalities, and forgiving hardiness, they are a great first to those who want to keep uromastyx. Adult Mali's usually have a base color of black, with neon yellow. Some females have been known to color up as strikingly as the males, but this will happen later in their lives. We usually call this male-mimic.

Max size is 17 inches.

HOUSING

Hatchlings can be housed in a 2'x2'x2' as a minimum; but for an active and established Mali, one can be placed in the permanent adult enclosure: Full grown adults, usually 6-8 inches in body, have to be placed in a 6'x2'x2' as a minimum.

Dry substrate is your goal; e.g. aspen shavings, timothy hay, bermuda grass, slate rocks or mixed gravel or soil. You don't want to use anything that's loose like commercial sand or small particle loose dirt. You can expect dust or sand to get in their food, go in their mouth, and become ingested; which leads to intestine impactions and death if left untreated. Seed can be used, but note that ingestion of seeds will happen. Not only can they overindulge on seed instead of their mineral and vitamin rich greens, but they also will ingest fecal matter.

All Uromastyx need a basking spot that heats up an area the size of their body. If you are having trouble getting the later stated *temperatures*, add in dark stone decor to better absorb the heat. Hides are another necessity, one Uromastyx, one hide; two Uromastyx two hides and so forth as a minimum. Usually, I recommend at least two hides-- one on the hot side, and one of the cool side. If your Uromastyx begins cage dancing, add in more hides to see if that helps. Cage dancing is not a good thing; it caves in backs and permanently deforms their spine. Ouch!

Having a thermometer or temp gun readily available will help you better understand what exactly is going on with your Uromastyx. If you notice any sort of odd behavior, having specific numbers helps me help you!

TEMPERATURE

Daytime: Your basking spot should reach 130°F for at least 3-4 hours a day. As long as you have that basking spot, their cool side can be at 80°F. The cool side should not be hotter than 85°F, so that your Uromastyx can choose to be cooler if their body needs it.

Nighttime: I wouldn't let your Mali, especially a baby or juvenile, drop below 75°F at night. This can be achieved by an under the tank heat pad, under their hide; or a natural moonlight bulb; or a ceramic heat emitter. The ceramic heat emitter is my preference.

NOTE: Glass cages can leech heat from your cage and make it cooler than you would think. Keep an eye on those temperature readings!

UVB : All Uromastyx need UVB. This can be achieved by ZooMed Reptisun 10.0 T5-HO, Power-suns 100 watts, or Arcadia T5 D3+ 12% UVB. All UVB lights should be no closer to the basking area than 12 inches.

FOOD

Grain: One of the following should be available daily in side dishes. I keep red Lentils readily available in their cage. You can also feed them split peas, quinoa (cooked), and millet.

Veggies: This should be offered every morning (hopefully before 11am). Endive, kale, red leaf, green leaf, dandelion greens, escarole and romaine. NOT spinach. And NO iceberg lettuce. Other greens can be offered but be careful about the quality of nutrients.

Root Veggies: This is an additional topping for your veggies that you can shred (root veggies can be fed every two to three days). Yellow squash, banana squash, zucchini, yams or sun burst squash. A handful adds variety to their meals.

Flowers: Uromastyx go for color and scent. So if you have roses, dandelions, hibiscus, and many other edible flowers, go ahead and toss them in. This can be catnip for Uromastyx.

How do I tell if my Uromastyx is dehydrated? Eyes are sunken in instead of sitting on their face. Their skin is pinched along the body, even when full. Poop is very dry, and not just because its been sitting under a heat lamp all afternoon.

My Uromastyx is dehydrated! How do I safely give him more water? If you notice him looking a little dehydrated and he is not in shed, then a bath can be administered for hydration purposes. If he is in shed, run his greens under water, shake them slightly, and the water droplets on the greens will hydrate him.

Usually babies, pregnant females, sick, and very, very old Uromastyx are those that you need to keep an eye on. All of their bodies are compromised in some way (except for the babies) so they can't properly hold and regulate their water.

How do I help my Uromastyx shed faster? I have found the exact opposite to be true with Uromastyx in comparison to lizard or snake care. When I keep Uromastyx at relatively low humidity's, usually about 12%-18% days and 30% nights, they shed faster. This leads me to believe a dryer environment creates optimal sheds.

NOTE : Semi-commonly, Mali Uromastyx have mouth problems. Shed get's stuck in the corners of their mouth and ends up compromising their mouth and scale structure. When your Mali Uromastyx is shedding, pay attention to the corners of their mouth. If it begins to build, do not pick at it. It will pull off scales. Take a q-tip dipped in hot water, and rub it over the mouth shed. They tend to love the mouth rubbing, and it moves around the stuck shed without pulling it off too early.