

Ornate Uromastyx

Uromastyx Ornata

Openly recognized as one of the most beautiful Uromastyx species, Ornates are widely popular. For a first Uromastyx Ornates can have some of the best personalities, openly crawling to you and up your arms.

Ornates can reach a max size of 13 inches.

HOUSING

For hatchlings (1-2 inches full body/tail) a 24-inch long tank is perfect, it's small and confined and everything is in front of your babies face. Once your Mali reaches juvenile status (about 3-4 inches in body) the only thing that would be changed would be the dimension of your cage. A juvenile can be housed in a 3'x2'x2' as a minimum; but for active, well established juveniles, they can already go into their permanent adult cage: Full grown adults, usually about 6-8 inches in body, have to be placed in their permanent home, a 4'x2'x2'.

Dry substrate is your goal; e.g. aspen shavings, Timothy hay, Bermuda grass, slate rocks or a gravel and soil mixture. You don't want to use anything that's loose like commercial sands or small particle loose dirt because it will get in their food, go in their mouth, become ingested; which leads to intestine impactions and death if left untreated. Seed can be used, but watch out for your Uromastyx overindulging in it. Their main diet must be a variety of greens, later stated.

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 decorations to better absorb the heat. Hides are also 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 also help you better understand what exactly is going on with your Uromastyx. Having specific numbers helps me help you!

TEMPERATURE

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

Nighttime: I wouldn't let your Ornate, especially a baby or juvenile, drop below 75F 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.

NOTE: Glass cages can leech heat from your cage and make it cooler than you would think.

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.

Root Veggies: This is an additional topping for your veggies that are usually shredded over them, (every two to three days). A pile of this adds variety to their meals. Yellow squash, banana squash, zucchini, yams or sun burst squash.

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 is usually like catnip for Uromastyx.

HUMIDITY : Shedding, I have found the exact opposite to be true with Uromastyx, in comparison to any other lizard or snake care sheet. When I keep Uromastyx at relatively low humidity's, usually about 12%-18% days and 30% nights, they shed faster. Soaking while in shed may lead to many bacterial issues.

How do I tell if my Uromastyx is dehydrated? Their eyes tend to be sunken in instead of sitting on their face. Their skin is a lot more pinched along the body, even if they are full. Their poop is very dry, and not just because its been sitting under a heat lamp all afternoon.

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.