



Mali *Uromastix* *Uromastix maliensis*

- Also known as the “dabb” or “spiny tailed” lizards, uromastix are a wide ranging genre ranging from arid regions of north Africa, the Middle East, to Southern Asia depending on the species.
- Other commonly kept species include the **Egyptian Uromastix (*Uromastix aegyptica*)**, **Nigerian Uromastix (*Uromastix niger*)**, **Saharan Uromastix (*Uromastix geryi*)**, and **Ornate Uromastix (*Uromastix ornata*)**.
- They are highly variable in color depending on sex and species, ranging from blackish, tan, yellowish, reddish, olive, to brown usually with lighter spots or ocelli on the back. All uromastix can be identified by their short broad heads and short, thick, spiny tails.
- If provided the proper care, uromastix can attain longevity of 10-15 years or more.

Size

Uromastix range from 10” up to 30” depending on species. The Mali Uromastix averages 14-20” as adults. The Egyptian Uromastix tends to be the largest species, reaching up to 36”.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling uromastix can be housed in a 15-20 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult uromastix require a minimum of a 30-40 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Hatchling and adult uromastix will thrive on a substrate of newspaper, play sand, reptile carpet, or paper towel. Avoid using reptile bark bedding or substrates that result in high humidity. Uromastix derive most of their water from their food; provide a water dish or mist them only infrequently. Provide artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, or logs for ample basking and hiding opportunities.

Uromastix are well suited for living in hot, arid conditions. For basking, create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Ideal temperatures for bearded dragons range in the low to mid 90’s degrees F on the cool side and around 120 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Uromastix must have overhead UVB incandescent, unfiltered sunlight, and fluorescent lighting to thrive.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least every other day. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

Feeding/Diet

Uromastix are primarily herbivores, eating fruit, vegetable, flower, and other plant matter with insects only occasionally eaten.

Feed uromastix in captivity a mixed assortment (a.k.a. a “reptile salad”) of chopped up vegetables daily (including carrots, peas, kale, corn, collard and dandelion greens, mustard greens, and beans). Feed green leaf lettuce sparingly if at all. Plant matter should be 80-90% of their diet. Uromastix will also accept crickets, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. Gut load these prey items by feeding them commercially available diets for added nutritional value. Feed uromastix these insects in a bowl or dish no more than 10-20% of their diet. Young uromastix are more carnivorous than adults.

Provide calcium and vitamin D3 supplements in Uromastix diets whenever possible.

Handling

As with many reptiles, hatchling and juvenile uromastix typically tend to be initially more nervous and defensive. Handle your uromastix gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. Most adults will settle down considerably and become quite docile and interactive pets to keep. ****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****