Nutrition Terms Glossary: Reptiles

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There is a wealth of jargon used throughout the reptile world. This is especially true when discussing reptile nutrition. Learning this vocabulary allows you to better understand articles and what veterinarians, reptile hobbyists and other reptile owners are saying. The following list of terms, while in no way comprehensive, contains some of the terms used to discuss reptile nutrition.

Carnivore
A reptile that requires animal flesh for proper nutrition and feeds exclusively on meat.

Faunarium
An enclosure to house feeder insects such as crickets.

Feeder insect
An insect, such as crickets and mealworms, that is fed to insectivores and other reptiles that require insects in their diets.

Fuzzy
A young mouse approximately six to thirteen days old that is fed to carnivorous reptiles. Called a fuzzy because it is just starting to grow hair.

Gut loading
The practice of feeding high quality, nutritious food to feeder insects in order to supply reptiles with additional vitamins, minerals, and nutrients.

Hemostat
A grasping tool used to hand feed live or prepared whole prey and feeder insects to reptiles.

Herbivore
A reptile that derives its nutrition from plants and feeds exclusively on plant material.

Hopper
A juvenile mouse approximately fourteen to twenty days old that is fed to carnivorous reptiles. Called a hopper because it is just starting to hop and move around.

Insectivore
A reptile that eats only insects.

Mealworm
The larval stage of a species of Darkling beetle, second most widely fed feeder insect.

Mealworm bedding

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Substrate that mealworms are kept in; doubles as a food source for them.

Omnivore

A reptile that eats both plants and animals to satisfy its nutritional requirements.

Pinhead

Refers to very small crickets that are fed to small or juvenile reptiles.

Pinky

A young, newborn mouse approximately one to five days old that is fed to carnivorous reptiles. Called a pinky because it is pink and hairless.

Superworm

The larval stage of the Zophobas beetle; feeder insect that is most popular with large reptiles.

Waxworm

The larval stage of the wax moth; feeder insects that should only be fed as an occasional treat to healthy reptiles because of the high fat content.

Whole prey

Referring to live, pre-killed, or frozen prey animals such as mice, rats, and chicks that are fed to carnivorous reptiles.

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