Terrariums: 3 Keys to Healthy Habitats

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One of the many joys of keeping exotic reptiles in your home is recreating a perfect habitat for your pet. Whether you set up a miniature rain forest, a desert, or woodland habitat complete with moss-covered vines, the key to your pet's best health lies in your creativity and understanding of the specific species you care for. Always read up on your reptile before you purchase living quarters, and please keep in mind these essential points when considering habitat:

Accommodations

Ideal accommodations combine creature comfort, maintenance ease, and an unobstructed view. Take into account the size that the reptile will grow into as an adult – will he always have room to move and climb? Will he be comfortable and safe? His habitat also must be secure enough to contain him when you are not around. For some excellent selections, see our cages.

Substrate

The appropriate substrate is an essential part of reproducing a natural habitat. In addition to enhancing the appearance of your cage, substrate also helps keep moisture, waste, and bacteria away from your pet. Always look for substrates that are easy to clean, good heat conductors, non-abrasive, and designed to meet the specific needs of your pet:

Desert Dwellers – Fine-grain sands for snakes, lizards, tortoises, and turtles include Zilla Ground English Walnut Shells, which will not cause problems if ingested in small quantities, and Calci-Sand which actually gives your reptile the nutritional benefits of added calcium.

Woodland Species – Glass lizards and other forest-dwelling reptiles prefer substrates that allow for shallow burrowing.

Rain Forest – Toads, frogs, salamanders, and other moss-dwelling creatures accustomed to damp environments will enjoy a substrate such as Jungle Mix, which retains much-needed moisture and humidity.

Heat & Light

When choosing the right lamps for heat and light, take into account your pet's living habits in the wild, such as what time of day (or night) he is normally active. Many reptiles need natural sunlight – or an appropriate substitute – in order to metabolize Vitamin D3. Also, temperature must be carefully controlled, since cold-blooded reptiles need heat lights or rocks to keep them warm.

Remember, just like any other pet, your exotic reptile depends on you. Providing him with the most appropriate living conditions will increase your chances of having a happy and healthy pet for many years to come.

We Recommend

Eco Earth naturally absorbs

Zilla Fir and Sphagnum Moss Mix

Lizard Litter is less abrasive

Calci-Sand clumps readily to

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and breaks down odors and waste.	is the perfect bedding choice for burrowing reptiles like lizards, snakes, turtles, tortoises, frogs, toads and arachnids.	than sand and bark.	waste material, drying it and preventing it from being spread throughout your reptile's enclosure.

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