

# Terrarium Cleaning

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## Cage Cleaning Recommendations

Reptiles require special care to maintain cleanliness. Routine cage maintenance is necessary to keep a safe and healthy home for your herp, and an enjoyable, odor-free, and attractive showplace.

Because reptiles are susceptible to skin and bacterial infections, cages and housing must be kept scrupulously clean. And since their fecal matter may carry bacteria (e.g., *Salmonella*) that can cause disease in humans, your reptile's cage, furnishings, and the cleaning equipment itself must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.



## Start with a Clean Cage

Make sure any natural items such as rocks and branches that you introduce into the environment are sterile. Rocks should be cleaned, and then boiled in water for 30 minutes. Rinse sand with large amounts of water to remove any particulate debris, then heat it in the oven at 200-250°F for 30 minutes. Also, clean branches and heat them in the oven at 200-250°F for 30 minutes.

## Cleaning Tools

Assemble a cleaning kit expressly for cleaning your reptile's cage. You can save time by having all cleaning tools in one place. We suggest including these items in your reptile cleaning kit:

- **Back-up cage** - a clean environment for the minutes, hours, or even days your herp must be relocated.

- **Buckets**
- **Brushes** - small and medium sizes depending on your cage. A clean toothbrush is good for corners and crevices in decorations.
- **Rubber [gloves](#) and goggles**
- **Sponges** - one set for cleaning, one for rinsing, and one for disinfecting.
- **Paper towels**
- **Terrarium cleaner** - dissolves matter hardened on surfaces. [Natural Chemistry Healthy Habitat](#) is great for disinfecting and deodorizing terrariums.
- **Q-tips, toothpicks, putty knives, and razor blades** to reach into the smallest of spaces, and remove hardened material.

Store these items separately from your other household cleaning supplies. To prevent cross-contamination, never use sinks or tubs used for human bathing or food preparation.

### **Disinfectants**

Selecting the proper cage or housing disinfectant must be done carefully. The disinfectant must be strong enough to kill disease-causing viruses, bacteria, and fungi, yet not harm your herp. Reptiles are sensitive to toxic fumes, so choose a disinfectant specifically formulated as "herp safe."

During cleaning procedures, we recommend using rubber or latex [gloves](#) and protective goggles. After every contact with your herp, and every cleaning procedure - no matter how large or small - wash your hands thoroughly. You may also wish to use a hand sanitizer.

With the proper [tools](#), cleaning your herp's habitat can be easy. And keeping your herp's home clean is the key to a longer, healthier life for your herp.