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AGAMAS

Hardwick's Spiny-tailed Lizard

Saara hardwickii

Saara hardwickii is a robust, herbivorous spiny-tailed lizard from the Thar Desert and the surrounding arid plains of India and Pakistan. It grows to 34-49 cm, digs deep burrows in firm ground and lives in loose colonies. It needs a large, warm, dry enclosure with a deep substrate and strong UVB. The species is rarely seen in the trade, and its care is largely based on experience with the genus *Uromastyx*.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Uromastyx hardwickii; Uromastyx hardwicki; Uromastyx griseus; Uromastyx reticulatus; Centrocercus similis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**34-49 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 70 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-32 °C**
Basking spot	**45-50 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**20-30%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**16-22 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Plants**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**8-15 eggs**
Incubation	**60-70 days** at 33-34 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs an enclosure of at least 150 × 70 × 60 cm (length × width × height), and bigger is better. Choose an enclosure made of wood, PVC or plastic with a glass front and preferably a mesh lid.
TEMPERATURE	The basking area must have a surface temperature of 45-50 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer directly under the lamp.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity must be low, 20-30 %, measured at the substrate on the cool side. Persistently high humidity makes the animal ill, so do not spray the enclosure.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong light. Use an LED lamp or a fluorescent tube of about 6500 K as daylight, separate from the heat.
FEEDING	*Saara hardwickii* is almost purely herbivorous, and in the wild grass is the most important food.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species lives alone in its burrow and must be kept singly. A new animal needs peace for the first few weeks and can take a long time to begin eating, especially if it is wild-caught.
NATIVE RANGE	India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.