



Gut-loading live food

What is gut-loading?

Gut-loading is offering a targeted nutrient food source to invertebrates that are fed to reptiles to fill their gastrointestinal tract with nutrients. These nutrients are then passed on to your reptile when these invertebrates are fed to them.

Why should feeder invertebrates be gut-loaded?

The invertebrates that are available for pet reptiles to eat have a different nutritional composition to the invertebrates consumed by wild reptiles. Feeder invertebrates for pet reptiles are usually too low in certain nutritional components and too high in others. It is important to gut-load live feeder invertebrates to correct some of these differences in order to prevent nutritional disease occurring in pet reptiles.

How should I gut-load feeder invertebrates?

Feeder invertebrates should be gut-loaded with vitamins and minerals by offering them an appropriate formulated gut-loading diet for 24–72 hours prior to feeding the invertebrates to your reptile. Formulated gut-loading diets are commercially available and are typically designed to be high in calcium, as this is the main nutritional component that is usually low in feeder invertebrates.

Are there any other types of care I should routinely provide to feeder invertebrates?

Feeder invertebrates should be kept in a large, well-ventilated container and they should be provided with a fresh source of water at all times (make sure that the depth of the water is suitable; if it is too deep, there is a risk that the invertebrates could drown in the water). If the invertebrates are kept for a period of time prior to gut-

loading, they should be fed safe vegetables for their own welfare and so the nutrients from their diet are passed on to your reptile.

