

# The Quick List of Edible Plants for Your Bioactive Terrarium

[RSS](#)



## The Quick List of Edible Plants for Your Bioactive Terrarium

Plants are a big part of creating a successful, healthy, thriving bioactive enclosure for your pet. In the wild, they play a variety of important roles in their local ecosystems, such as filtering the air and water, producing oxygen, aerating and enriching the soil, and providing food for animals. Without living plants, you don't really have a truly bioactive environment.

When you have a pet herbivore or omnivore (bearded dragon, uromastyx, tortoise, etc.), you need to be careful about the kinds of plants that you place in their enclosure. Their appetite is triggered by the color green, and it's likely that they'll take an experimental bite or two — if not eat the whole plant! Even if your pet is an insectivore (ex: leopard gecko), they can still be affected by the plants in their enclosure because CUC and loose feeder insects may munch on those plants. If your insectivorous pet eats one of those bugs, they're eating a bit of the plants they eat, too.

Fortunately, there's lots of plants that are safe for reptiles to eat, whether directly or indirectly. Here's a quick list of some of the most popular, easily-found plants to consider for your bioactive setup.

## Cacti & Succulents

These are plants with low water needs and a high heat tolerance. Exceptionally low-maintenance as houseplants, and great for desert reptile enclosures.

- Agave (*Agave spp.*)
- Aloe (*Aloe spp.*)
- Broadleaf Stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*)
- Gasteria (*Gasteria spp.*)
- Haworthia (*Haworthia spp.*)
- Heartleaf Iceplant (*Aptenia cordifolia*)
- Hens and Chicks (*Echeveria spp.*)
- House Leek (*Sempervivum spp.*)
- Jade Plant (*Crassula ovata*, *C. argentea*, *C. portulacea*)
- Mother of Pearl Plant (*Graptopetalum paraguayense*, *Sedum weinbergii*, *Echeveria weinbergii*)
- Sedum (*Sedum spp.* — exception: *Sedum acre*)
- Yucca (*Yucca spp.*)

## Grasses

Grasses have a range of care needs, but generally like a lot of light. What's nice about grasses is that they have a lovely natural appearance and can be included in a variety of different types of habitats.

- Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)
- Barley Grass (*Hordeum spp.*)
- Carex (*Carex spp.*)
- Couch Grass (*Elymus repens*)
- Fescue (*Festuca spp.*)
- Millet (*Panicum miliaceum*)
- Oat Grass (*Avena spp.*)
- Rye Grass (*Lolium perenne*)
- Timothy (*Phleum pratense*)
- Wheat Grass (*Triticum spp.*)

## Flowering Plants

Flowers aren't just for outside or keeping in a vase — you can grow them in your pet's enclosure, too! Having plants that consistently flower in your enclosure is a reliable sign that you're doing something right.

- African Violet (*Saintpaulia*)
- Alyssum (*Alyssum maritimum*)
- Aster (*Aster spp.*)
- Astilbe (*Astilbe spp.*)
- Balloon Flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*)
- Bell Flower (*Campanula spp.*)
- Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis, Calystegia sepium*)
- Bristly Oxtongue (*Pricris echiodes, Helminthotheca echioides, Helmintia echioides*)
- California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)
- Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*)
- Clover (*Trifolium spp.*)
- Coral Bells (*Heuchera spp.*)
- Coreopsis (*Coreopsis spp.*)
- Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*)
- Cosmos (*Cosmos spp.*)
- Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Daylily (*Hemerocallis*)
- Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*)
- Evening Primrose (*Oenothera spp.*)
- Geranium (*Geranium spp.*)
- Hawkbit (*Leontodon spp.*)
- Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*)
- Hosta (*Hosta spp.*)
- Jasmine (*Jasminum spp.*)
- Lungwort (*Pulmonaria spp.*)
- Mallow (*Malva spp.*)
- Marigold (*Calendula spp.*)
- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)
- Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
- Pansy (*Viola tricolor hortensis*)
- Petunia (*Petunia spp.*)
- Phlox (*Phlox spp.*)
- Pinks (*Dianthus spp.*)
- Pink Purslane (*Claytonia sibirica*)
- Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*)
- Salvia (*Salvia spp.*)
- Sea Holly (*Eryngium spp.*)
- Snap Dragon (*Antirrhinum spp.*)
- Speedwell (*Veronica spp.*)
- Violet (*Viola spp.*)
- Zinnia (*Zinnia spp.*)

### **Misc. Greenery**

These plants tend to have higher water needs (with some exceptions), and they're easy to find because they're popular houseplants or garden plants.

- Air Plant (*Tillandsia*)
- Bamboo (*Fargesia spp.*, *Phyllostachys spp.*)
- Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*)
- Bromeliad (*Bromeliodeae*)
- Coleus (*Plectranthus spp.*)
- Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
- Dracaena (*Dracaena spp.*)
- Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla spp.*)
- Oak Leaf Ivy (*Cissus rhombifolia*)
- Pilea (*Pilea cadierei*, *P. spruceana*)
- Polka Dot Plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*)
- Prayer Plant (*Maranta leuconeura*, *Calathea spp.*)
- Snake Plant (*Sansevieria spp.*)
- Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)
- Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*, *T. zebrina*)

## Herbs and Vegetables

Herbs and vegetables tend to need more water than most of the other options on this list, so keep that in mind. The herbs and vegetable plants on this list are safe, but don't assume that all fruits and vegetables that are safe for humans to eat are also safe for your pet.

- Arugula (*Eruca sativa*, *E. vesicaria*)
- Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*)
- Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Carrot (*Daucus carota sativus*)
- Cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*)
- Cress (*Brassica hirta*, *B. napus*)
- Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)
- Garden Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*)
- Kale (*Brassica oleracea*)
- Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*)
- Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*)
- Mint (*Mentha sachalinesis*, *M. spicata*, *M. suaveolens*)
- Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)
- Squash (*Curcubita spp.*)
- Thyme (*Thymus ssp.*)
- Watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*)
- Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*)

Don't just walk into the plant nursery and grab the first plants that appeal to you. Pay attention to each plant's needs for light and water, heat tolerance, and how tall they can be expected to grow. This is information that can usually easily be found on the plant's identification tag or information card, and if not there, a quick Google search will answer your questions. If you're not sure whether a plant is edible for reptiles, [The Tortoise Table](#) is a fantastic quick reference. If you can't find it there, Google may once again be helpful, but when in doubt, don't take the risk and use a different plant in your pet's terrarium.

**Pro Tip:** Before placing new plants in your bioactive enclosure, give the leaves and roots a thorough rinse in cool water. If at all possible, repot with clean, organic soil and let sit for at least a month to purge chemical residues and any potential pests.

Thank you Mariah, from Reptifiles.com for such a great informative article.

The Dude Abides