**BIOACTIVE SOIL**

**The idea behind bio-active substrates is that you will have an entire eco system in your reptiles’ cage. The benefits from this are awesome. The natural good bacteria, microbes, isopods, substrate mites, and other insects that live in the soil, virtually act as a sanitation crew. Fecal matter can be completely broken down in less than a day. Even uneaten food items get broken down. Some cages have had the same substrate for close to 5 years without ever being changed or even spot cleaned. There are no foul odors or even any trace of fecal matter. The uneaten food items get broken down so fast that they never really have a chance to stink so they go un-noticed…**

**Creating a bio-active substrate is quite easy. It may involve things you are not used to hearing like, DO NOT BAKE, CLEAN, DISINFECT, OR WASH ANYTHING. Your friends in natural dirt will take care of all that for you.**

**My first step is to go to a garden shop and get some organic topsoil… I then get some sand. You can use play sand that can be bought in home and garden shops. The I go to the woods to collect leaf compost, branches, logs, dirt and rotten wood/logs. I prefer to take ones filled with isopods, millipedes, centipedes, and wood lice/substrate mites. Then I go and scoop up some fallen oak leaves…**

**So at the bottom of the cage we mix some of the sand, dirt, topsoil, and leaf compost together. On top of that we add the rotten wood with all who inhabit it… Then we put more of the dirt mix on top of that and we then add the leaves. Your substrate ratios will depend on the species you are keeping. For instance, for most of the varanids we use a 50% sand, 25% compost, and 25% dirt/topsoil mix.**

**There is never any mold growth or build up of harmful parasites, bacteria, or other protozoa.**

**This system may not be for everyone but those who have used it see the huge benefits in it. We have seen huge differences in behavior. Animals being kept on the bio active substrates seem to behave more naturally. They are more active and are always on the hunt for food.**

**Some people will say that there is a huge risk of impaction when using particulate substrates. The fact is NATURAL particulate substrates will only be an issue if your husbandry is inadequate. When reptiles are properly heated, hydrated, and supplemented, there is little to no risk of impaction and the benefits from using bio active substrates far outweigh the minimal risks.**