

terrestrial turtle care sheet



Terrestrial turtles spend time on dry land and can typically be found in or near shallow water. Box turtles have two separate shells joined together on the sides, and can completely close themselves up in their shells.

facts

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|---------------------|---|
| includes: | painted wood and Asian box turtles |
| average adult size: | 5 to 12 inches long, depending on species |
| average life span: | up to 40 years with proper care, depending on species |
| diet: | omnivore |

Will reach adult size in 7 to 10 years, depending on species and under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your turtle grows.



Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources on the back of this Care Sheet or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced terrestrial turtle diet consists of:

- These terrestrial turtles need a pelleted commercial turtle diet.
- Gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, waxworms, mealworms and earthworms.
- Grasses, dark leafy vegetables and fruits.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your terrestrial turtle:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times. Some turtles have a tendency to go to the bathroom in their water bowl, so expect to clean and disinfect this daily.
- Feed daily.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multivitamin supplement once or twice a week.
- Discard uneaten vegetables and fruits within 24 hours.

housing

- Size - Juvenile indoor habitat of a 20 to 40 gallon aquarium that allows for free movement within the habitat. Adult outdoor pen with a screened lid, at least 3'x4'x12" to accommodate normal behavior and exercise; don't keep outdoors if temperature drops below 70°F.
- Habitat - Provide a shaded hiding area in both dry and wet areas of the habitat. Maintain 70% to 90% humidity by misting as needed every day.
- Substrate - Use pelleted, mulch or moss-type substrate that retains moisture; turtles may eat substrate—if they do, switch to something they can't eat.
- Temperature - Daytime of 75 to 85°F, basking area of 95°F, and nighttime of 70 to 76°F.
- Lighting - UVB lighting for 10 to 12 hours a day is required.

red flags

- Eye, nose or mouth discharge
- Abnormal feces
- Discoloration, bumps or spots on shell or skin
- Sneezing, runny nose
- Lethargic
- Overgrown beak
- Frantic swimming

If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.



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An incandescent day bulb can be used for basking area during daylight hours if not using a ceramic heater.

- Water - Provide constant access to a shallow container large enough for the turtle to soak in and drink from; the turtle should be able to easily enter and exit the water bowl.
- Can house same species of turtle together but do not house different turtle species together.

normal behavior

- Some species are excellent at swimming, climbing and digging; provide an interesting environment.
- Over time and with gentle handling, they can learn to recognize you as you approach.

habitat maintenance

- Keep the habitat clean and pick up leftover food and feces right away.

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place turtle in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all traces of bleach smell. Dry the tank and furnishings completely and add clean substrate.

grooming & hygiene

Terrestrial turtles occasionally replace their individual scutes as they grow.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active and alert
- Eats regularly
- Healthy, hard shell with no lesions
- Clear, bright eyes with no swelling
- Healthy skin with no sores
- Clear nose and vent

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
GI tract parasites	Poor appetite, listlessness, possibly diarrhea and anal prolapse.	Consult your veterinarian as soon as possible.
Respiratory infection	Open-mouth breathing, eye, nose and/or mouth discharge, sneezing; can be caused by a cold habitat.	Consult your veterinarian and ensure habitat is the proper temperature.
Shell rot/ulcers	Discolored or foul-smelling patches or pits on the shell that can become infected; may be caused by an unclean habitat or improper diet.	Consult your veterinarian and ensure daily cleanings and/or diet changes.
Eye or respiratory infection	Swollen eyes and sides of head; may be caused by a vitamin A deficiency.	Consult your veterinarian and use a vitamin supplement.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Commercial terrestrial turtle food
- Substrate
- Moss
- Food dish and water ramp bowl
- Mealworm dish
- Hideaway place
- Climbing décor
- Plants
- Basking bulb
- Heat fixture
- Under-tank heater
- UVB lighting and fixture
- Vitamin supplement
- Calcium supplement
- Cricket keeper
- Cricket quencher
- Cricket food
- Thermometer
- Humidity gauge
- Book about terrestrial turtles

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on terrestrial turtles and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all reptiles are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your reptile or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for reptiles and should consider not having a reptile as a pet.

Go to **cdc.gov/healthypets** and **petco.com/caresheet** for more information about reptiles and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to **petco.com** for more information.



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