

Box Turtles

HABITAT: Box turtles should be kept outdoors in a safe enclosure. They are good climbers so you need a fence they are not able to climb over or dig under. It is a good idea to have a wire top to protect them from other animals and birds. They like to hide in leaves and under plants. They like to have filtered sun. Be sure to provide them with a soaking container and be sure to clean it often as they will go to the bathroom in the water. If you have to keep them inside to sure to provide them with a full spectrum light to augment the natural sunlight. Get them outside on sunny days. This is vital for their health.

FOODS: They can be picky eaters. Do not panic if they will not eat when you first get yours. Try a variety of foods such as earthworms or night crawlers, bananas, tomatoes, melons, berries, other soft fruit, snails, slugs and crickets. Be sure the snails and slugs have not been near snail poison. Calcium and vitamins should be sprinkled lightly on the food once a week.

HIBERNATION: Usually in the fall as the days start to cool you will notice your box turtle will begin to eat less, bask less and appear sluggish. This is a good sign they are getting ready to hibernate. They like to bury themselves just under the ground or under a pile of leaves. They do require a somewhat moist area so an occasional rain will not harm them just be sure they do not get flooded.

ILLNESSES: Be sure to isolate a new box turtle for at least 3 months before introducing it to others you may already have. If you are worried that your box turtle is ill you should take it to the vet for a checkup. An unhealthy box turtle should be kept in the house in a warm enclosure 85 degrees is best. Be sure to feed a variety of food and provide a dish of water for it to soak in. If your box turtles appears to have a lump on the side of its head it probably has an abscess in its ear. It should be seen by a good reptile veterinarian.

INCUBATION: Box turtles will usually nest between April and July and can lay more than one clutch. The eggs can be left in the ground and allowed to hatch on their own. If this is the case then a wire over the enclosure is a must or birds will get the babies. You can also dig the eggs and place in an incubator kept around 85 degrees. The eggs need to be kept moist, (not wet). They will usually hatch in 60 to 90 days. The eggs should not be turned as this will kill the hatchling.

Turtle & Tortoise Rescue of Arroyo Grande, Inc.
A 501(c)3 non-profit rescue
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