

MEDITERRANEAN TORTOISE HATCHLINGS

Testudo marginata, greaca, hermanni, horsfieldi, kleinmanni

Shell: The shell of a hatchling is flexible but should harden in a few weeks with proper food and sunlight. It is important that children do not play with them. If dropped it can kill them.

Habitat: A 4x6 outside habitat is suitable for hatchlings. It should have a wire cover to protect them from predators. It should have grass and weeds growing for them to eat. Also it needs a night house. In the evening place them in the house and after a few days you will find they go in without your help. During the cold nights they will need a heater to keep them from hibernating. After they are about 3 years they should be allowed to hibernate.

Food: Grass and weeds should be 90% of their diet. The rest can be rose petals (do not use any chemicals), hibiscus leaves and flowers, grape leaves, mulberry leaves and prickly pear cactus. Calcium and reptile vitamins should be given once a week. You can sprinkle them on a wet leaf. Cuttle bone can also be offered.

Water: Warm water (70-75 degrees) can be offered once a week. The water should only be about half way up the shell. They can not swim and will drown if too deep. Stay with them and when it appears they want out, remove them. This is a good time to wipe the dirt and poop from the shell. Do not leave a dish of water in the habitat.

Hibernation: They should not be allowed to hibernate for the first 2-3 winters. This gives them a good start. This can be avoided by keeping them at 75-80 degrees. If you have to bring them in during the winter they will need a heating pad set on low under one side of the habitat. A full spectrum light is essential during the day for normal growth. On sunny days they should be placed outside to sun. Be sure they always have shade available. Check them frequently as they tip over easily. Never put them outside in a glass aquarium as they can easily overheat and die.

Turtle & Tortoise Rescue of Arroyo Grande, Inc.
a 501(C)3 rescue
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