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## Box tortoise

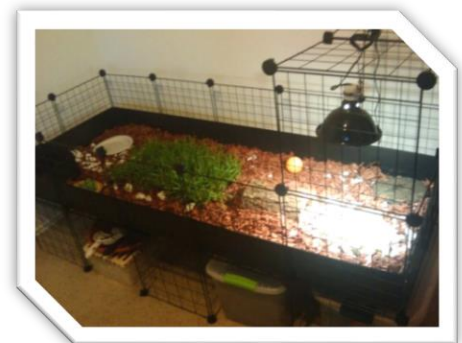
Adequate temperature		
	Hot spot	Cold spot
Day temperature	31 °C	22 °C
Night temperature	22 °C	20 °C

### **Main Features :**

The box turtle is the most sold land tortoise because of its small size as an adult. There are several subspecies of box turtle. The length of an adult box turtle is about 20 cm and its life expectancy is around 50 years. Some individuals can reach the respectable age of 60 with good care and good conditions of captivity. This species of turtle has the ability to completely close its plastron (lower part of the carapace) to protect itself from predators. It is possible to determine the sex of your box turtle using certain characteristics. In the male, the color of the iris is orange and in the female it is brown. The male has a concave curvature for more stability during mating while in the female, the curvature is rather convex.

### **Captivity:**

The box turtle is a terrestrial wetland animal. He needs a large terrarium of at least 3' x 2'. On the other hand, the bigger the habitat, the better! It is possible to install it in a 50 gallon aquarium, but it often happens that the turtle bumps into the glass and damages its beak. Some owners build the habitat of their turtles themselves, either in wood or with other materials. To maintain the proper temperature, the use of a heating mat, out of reach of the animal, can be used as well as a heat lamp not accessible for the latter. The carpet must be installed under the terrarium to avoid any direct contact. If the animal has access to the heating source, the risk of burns is very high. A reptile does not feel the heat on its skin, it is only once it is too late that it feels the wound. The degree of humidity (40-50%) and the temperature (see the table above) must be carefully monitored to preserve the health of your turtle. In addition, your habitat must have a UVA-UVB lighting system to provide a source of calcium for your reptile. The UVA-UVB lamp should be changed every 6 months to maintain good efficiency. A timer will better control the exposure time to UVA-UVB lights. As a substrate, grass paper or carpet can be put in the bottom. Natural substrates such as earth, sphagnum moss or others can be used but they contaminate easily and need to be changed often. On the other hand, these substrates retain moisture better. The addition of hiding places purchased in pet stores or home-made is strongly recommended to allow him to isolate himself at his convenience. A



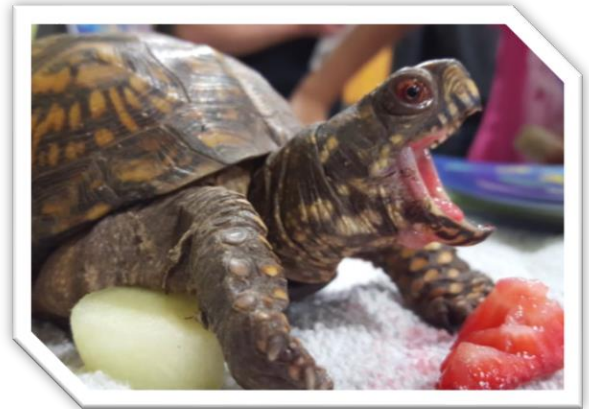
shallow water bowl or pool with a shallow ramp must be installed in the habitat to allow it to cool off. The important thing is that there is enough water for it to cool but without it exceeds ¼ of its shell. This is not a good swimmer, on the contrary! If there is too much water, she risks drowning.

### **Food :**

The box turtle is omnivorous. She needs various vegetables (see the leaf of vegetables) and worms such as earthworms, spiders (from where we know the source), mealworms, crickets, snails, etc. The addition of calcium and multivitamins is essential to his diet, as are all reptiles. It is recommended to add 2 to 3 times a week on worms or vegetables before offering them to your companion. There is the possibility of offering a commercial tortoise mussel, however it must not represent more than 25% of its diet, because this turtle is mainly vegetarian.

### **Frequent health problems:**

- **Infections:** Infections can occur in the mouth (stomatitis), on the skin (bacterial or fungal) or in the form of abscess. This condition is often the cause of poor nutrition, excess moisture or poor hygiene.
- **Parasites:** A turtle can sometimes catch parasites by being outside, boarding, being fed by parasitic prey or if its owner has been in contact with parasites that he has brought home unintentionally. If the animal is not treated following the appearance of parasites, it could become anemic and die. Parasites feed on your pet's blood, or he can find the nutrients he needs to survive.
- **Obstruction:** A poorly informed owner can offer too much prey to his turtle. The turtle sometimes has eyes bigger than the belly and will try to eat its prey. That's when she may choke!
- **Cloacal prolapse:** A cloacal prolapse is an externalization of part of the digestive system of your reptile. It is therefore possible to see part of the intestine of your reptile out its cloaca (opening that connects the anus and the reproductive system). A visit to your veterinarian is required!
- **Carapace breakage:** Breakage occurs during an accident! The owner or a child drops the turtle, it falls from a piece of furniture or it serves as a toy to your dog. In any case, a visit to the emergency vet is essential!



As with all animals, it is recommended that an examination be conducted after the purchase of a new reptile and an annual check is required. The annual exam helps prevent health problems that may occur and thus save the life of your pet. If in doubt, a visit to the veterinarian is required! A reptile, whatever it is, will hide its symptoms so as not to become an easy prey for predators (humans). At the slightest change in behavior, contact your veterinarian.

