



# Red Foot Tortoise Care



The Red Foot Tortoise is a medium-size species. Adults are 12-18", though tortoises over 14" are rare. With proper care, they should outlive their owners. The usual life expectancy in captivity is about 50 years.

Example Of Diet:

- Greens:
  - turnip greens
  - collards
  - kale
  - red & green leaf lettuce
  - endive
  - escarole
  - chicory
  - Dandelion (organic)
- Fruit:
  - papaya
  - mangoes
  - apples

- melons
- cactus fruit
- blueberries
- strawberry
- Vegetables:
  - all squash
  - carrots
  - occasionally green beans
  - broccoli
  - cauliflower
- Animal matter:
  - once a month or so, feed a source of animal protein. I provide a mash of tortoise pellets and meal worms/silkworms

## Water:

Redfoot tortoises should have water available at all times. The dish should be large enough for them to soak in and shallow enough for them to enter and escape from easily. Outdoors, adults enjoy a small wading pool. They also love to wallow in mud! Be sure to watch young tortoise while outdoors as birds or cats may attack and try to eat them.

## Housing:

- Indoors:
  - For hatchlings, Rubbermaid storage containers work well also. 40 -gallon aquariums as they keep the moisture and heat. Until they are about six months old, I use only long stem sphagnum moss as a substrate and coco husk. Hatchlings are very prone to dehydration, and moss holds the moisture very well. As they get older, I start adding topsoil to the mix and live, tortoise safe plants. Ensure the substrate is slightly moist and that the temps are warm. Provide a few options for hiding areas; cork is an excellent option for smaller tortoise hides!
  - I suspend a basking light over one end of the container. I prefer to use a 100 watt - 125-watt mercury light (heat & UVB in one). Remember to switch out the bulb, even if still emitting light, once a year as the UVB slowly degrades over time. I raise or lower it to get the temps in the low 90's in the basking area; the cooler end should be in the mid to upper 70's. Night temps can drop to 70°F. If it gets lower, I use a small 50-watt ceramic heat bulb (no light) thermostat on the side with a hide and offer another hide on the cool side. Having two different sides gives a temperature gradient, which allows them to choose a comfort level for them.
  - For juveniles and adults, a tortoise table is the best option. Good plans can be found at Tortoise Table by Vickie Hale, Exo Terra and Zoomed also have premade tortoise hutch options available. Since they do get rather large, the bigger you can make this, the better.

- Outdoors:
  - As they get larger, outdoor pens during the warm months are the best choice. Again these should be as large as possible. Humidity is essential, so if you live in a dry climate, additional moisture will be needed from sprinklers and misters.
  - There should be a heavily planted area to provide cover and additional humidity. I also use a large deck box with a hole cut out in the side as a retreat. It's fitted with ceramic heat emitters on a thermostat to provide heat on cool nights. I also have a large computer type fan to provide extra air circulation and cooling. I put a few inches of cypress mulch in there for excess moisture.

\*\*All information in this sheet is meant as a good start for your new red foot tortoise, please also seek advice from a qualified exotic vet.

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