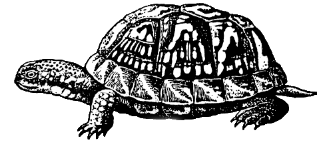


Box Turtles



Congratulations on your new box turtle. Box turtles have been known to live for 150 years. If you follow the advice given below, you will help yours to achieve a long and healthy life.

Your box turtle cannot live on lettuce. He is a meat eater. In nature he eats live and dead creatures (the whole animal). This gives him all of his nourishment. He will also eat various fruits and vegetables when he is in the mood to do so. In captivity, you must try to imitate his natural environment. His physical and psychological needs must be met. He cannot meet these needs in a fish aquarium. **HE IS AN OUTDOOR TURTLE.** Don't stick him into an aquarium. This is **CRUEL!**

The following is a list of foods he should eat: canned dog food, dry dog food which has been softened by soaking in warm water, little bits of raw steak, snails, earthworms, mealworms and crickets. He may enjoy corn on the cob (raw), strawberries, tomatoes, melons, especially cantaloupe, peaches, apricots and sometimes they will nibble on lettuce. Leftover chicken and turkey, cooked, bones and all, should be offered also.

Box turtles need water to drink, to soak in, and to "eliminate waste" in. He cannot swim, therefore, never put him in water too deep. A large clay or plastic flower pot saucer is suitable. He also

needs a place to hide and to sleep which can be a nice big pile of dried leaves and grass clippings which have NEVER been exposed to insecticide or fertilizer. Or, you can build him a cozy wooden house (a dog house if fine) and add some leaves and grass clippings or even shredded newspaper. The turtle must feel secure at all times.

Once a week or so, put a drop or two of “Drop A Day” vitamins birds (or dogs or cats) by Geisler, in his water or on his food. This product is fat-soluble and will not get him all gummed up and it will ensure that he is getting enough Vitamin A which is vital for his health and prevents many illnesses.

Your box turtle may safely hibernate outdoors (unless of course, you live in North Dakota!!!) but he must never be in an area where it floods deeply. Instead of allowing him to dig face down into the mud and possibly drown, towards the end of summer, begin building up a high pile of dried grass clippings and leaves. You will find that your turtle will go into this area and not under it. A small wooden structure can also be provided, such as a dog house and this can be filled with clean grass clippings and leaves and shredded newspaper. If you do not have an area in your yard that does not flood, then you can put the box turtle into a box also filled with grass clippings, etc., moisten it and store him in your garage for the winter, making sure that the turtle remains MOIST. He will dehydrate quickly otherwise. Keep the box up off of the floor away from drafts and rats. Depending on the weather, box turtles usually hibernate from about the end of October until sometime in March. He will be sluggish upon awakening. Make

sure that there is water available to him and in a few weeks he will be acting like his old self again.

If your box turtle develops a runny nose and swollen eyes, bring him indoors and keep him warm (86 degrees or more) constantly. NEVER ALLOW A TURTLE TO HIBERNATE IF HE IS INJURED OR SICK. Let him soak in warm water up to his nose with a few drops of the vitamins mentioned above in the water for an hour or even more a day. More in the summertime. Often, just the water therapy brings about a cure because the turtle is just dehydrated. If no improvement is seen in a week or two, consult a veterinarian or a person experienced in treating turtles and tortoises.

If you have to keep your box turtle awake all winter for whatever reason, be sure to keep him warm, give him lots of warm baths and keep him feeding. A Vita-Lite (sun substitute) is recommended for any turtle or tortoise which is NEVER allowed outdoors.

Please do not use snail bait anywhere in your yard. If you have a dog, please do not EVER leave it alone with the turtle. Dogs enjoy "playing" with turtles and many times seriously injure them and even bury them. Raccoons and Possums also take their toll on our pets. Keep them safe. They are in your care now.

