



Yellow-foot or Red-foot Tortoise

Diet and Care Recommendations

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Red-foot tortoise (*Geochelone carbonaria*) and the Yellow-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulate*) are found in South America over a wide range from Bolivia through Brazil. These species are true “rainforest” species.

Adult size: 15-20 inches

Temperature: 65-90°F

DIET

Vegetables: A variety of dark leafy greens should constitute the majority of the diet. Good choices include collard greens, mustard greens, dandelion greens, chard, kale, and parsley. Avoid iceberg and romaine lettuce, as they have little nutritional value. Edible flowers can also be offered, including dandelion and nasturtium.

Fruit: Can be routinely offered and constitutes a significant portion of the wild diet.

Invertebrates: These tortoises occasionally feed on invertebrates. Earth worms can be offered OCCASIONALLY (twice monthly).

ENVIRONMENT

These tortoises should be kept in an enclosure that provides them with plenty of space to move around, dig, and hide.

Lighting: Tortoises require a specific wavelength of light called UVB. It is required for the proper absorption of calcium. We recommend using a full-spectrum bulb, Reptisun 5.0 or 10.0, manufactured by ZooMed. Leave UVB bulbs on for 14 hours a day, and make sure that the bulb is not filtered through glass or plastic. These bulbs need to be changed every 6 months because their effectiveness as a UVB emitter decreases over time.

Heat: Use ceramic heat emitter bulbs. The temperature gradient should be 90°F under the basking lamp and 65-70°F in the coolest part of the enclosure. Keep a thermometer under the lamp and on the cool end. Never use heat rocks or heating pads.

Substrate: Cypress Mulch or Coconut fiber is the recommended bedding or paper based products such as Carefresh. Keep moist.

Moisture: These tortoises live in the rainforest where the humidity is up to 100%. To maintain high humidity (at least 80%), mist at least 2-3 times daily and place a large dish of water on the warm end of the enclosure. To read humidity, keep a humidistat or hygrometer in the enclosure. Also provide a large dish of water for soaking and defecating. Change the water often.

MEDICAL CARE

An annual examination and fecal test are recommended. A blood panel may also be recommended depending on the size and age of your tortoise.

Common Illnesses:

Parasitic Infections: Symptoms include: loss of appetite, inability to gain weight, and slow growth. Diagnosis is obtained by performing a fecal test. Treatment involves administering an oral anti-parasitic medication.

Impaction: Caused by the ingestion of foreign objects. Symptoms include: loss of appetite and inability to produce stools. Tortoises exhibiting these symptoms should be seen by a veterinarian right away. Treatment can be difficult and sometimes requires surgery.

Upper Respiratory Infection: These infections can be viral and/or bacterial. Symptoms include: discharge from nose or eyes, decreased appetite, and lethargy.