



7311 E. Thomas Rd. / Scottsdale, AZ 85251
Phone: 480-945-8484 / Fax: 480-945-8766
Hours: 7:00 A.M. – 11:00 P.M. / 7 Days a Week
Website: tsvcpets.com

Dr. William J. Langhofer, DVM
Dr. Rowena D'Monte, DVM
Dr. David Gosche, DVM
Dr. Samantha Lieberman, DVM

DESERT TORTOISE CARE

COLD WEATHER CARE:

- Tortoises should be kept outside year round – unless they are ill, than they should not hibernate
- Bring your tortoise in every SEPTEMBER for a pre-hibernation exam and to get feces checked for parasites
- When the weather becomes cooler in the fall, the tortoise will prepare for hibernation
- To help with this process, you can construct a den – see attached Den Construction Handout
- If you cannot construct a den, you may place the tortoise in a garage or storeroom - However this is NOT ideal
- The temperature for ideal hibernation conditions should remain between 40 – 55 degrees Fahrenheit and humidity should be between 30 – 46%
- If the hibernation area is too warm – the tortoise CANNOT hibernate properly
- Keep your tortoise in a dark draft free area – be sure to check on it every week – but do not move it
- If the animal is being kept indoors for hibernation. It is possible for it to become dehydrated – Offer water every 4 – 6 weeks and every 2 – 3 weeks for juveniles
- If you tortoise chooses to NOT hibernate in the burrow – even after you've moved it back to the burrow / den – it could be sick – If this is the case – bring your tortoise in for an exam immediately

WARM WEATHER CARE:

- When the tortoise emerges from hibernation – keep shallow pools of drinking water available – Do not leave large pools as desert tortoises CANNOT swim and will drown – If you have a pool or pond – make sure it is BLOCKED OFF so that the tortoise CANNOT reach it
- The shallow pools of water are for drinking and lounging in – The tortoise can absorb water from their cloaca - which is located in their tail – while sitting in the water
- During the extremely HOT months – your tortoise will go underground and become less active – Make sure that their food, water and shade are ALWAYS easily accessible
- If you don't want your animal to roam free in the backyard – you can create an enclosure – The enclosure MUST be a minimum of 120 feet – This can house either a single male or up to 3 females – If you are using wire fencing – make sure the holes in the fencing are at least 2 inches wide to prevent the tortoise from becoming entangled
- Females and males should be separated from each other to avoid breeding
- The enclosure walls should be at least 18 inches high to prevent escape since tortoises are good climbers
- If you have any questions about DESERT TORTOISES – Please contact The Sonora Desert Museum at: 520-883-3062 or visit their website at: www.desertmuseum.org - You may also ask one of our friendly and knowledgeable staff member at The Scottsdale Veterinary Clinic