

# Hatchling Care



# Hatchling Birth

- Eggs are laid in May and June
- Incubation period is 90-120 days
- Hatchlings appear in late August and September
- Some may overwinter, appearing in spring



# Hatchling Birth



- Remove shell stuck to skin with damp Q-Tip
- Hatchlings' skin naturally flakes—don't pull it off!!
- **Factoid:** Hatchlings can travel up to 1/3 mile before brumation



# General Hatching Care

- Hatchlings, like all tortoises, **must live outside**
- Need a safe habitat with
  - Burrow
  - Growing food
  - MegaDiet 2-3 times/week
  - Water
- Hatchlings brumate, too
- No terrariums!
- In the wild, the hatchling is ready to live outside on its own

# Things to Think About

- Hatchlings are difficult to raise (die easily)
- They need more area than you would think (100 square feet minimum-5' x 20')
- If you have more than one hatchling, eventually you will have the problem of fighting or mating. You will have to give one away or create separate habitats

# Selecting a Habitat Site

- Lots of sunlight
- Avoid narrow side of house because
  - Heat collects there
  - Often it's a drainage area from roof or back yard
- Not against wall (heat collector)
- Dry area with space around it

# Building the Habitat



# Habitat Specs

- Make the area long rather than square
  - Dry and wet areas at opposite ends
  - Nicer for tortoise to walk a long way
- Create walls an escape-artist hatchling:
  - Cannot see through
  - Cannot climb out of
  - Cannot fall into
  - Cannot climb the corners with those needle-like claws



# Hatchling Habitat

**Dry End with Burrows**



**Wet End Has Growing Food**



# Hazards

- Grass - They can become high-centered
- Birds or cats may snatch them. You can create a removable top frame from chicken wire, plastic fencing, and various other materials
- Dogs, children, adult burrows, adult water dish
- Tortoises walk the edges. Keep edges clear of even small rocks, twigs, or weeds
- Pay special attention to anything in the habitat that could flip a tortoise over, trap it, or that it could fall off of

# Food

- Teach your little one to browse, just like an adult. Have growing food available.
- Offer MegaDiet only 2-3 times weekly. Especially important for the calcium
- **Note: Fast growth is not healthy**

