

Tortoise Group Newsletter

Hotline: 702-739-7113

The Organization for the Protection of Nevada's Resident Tortoises, Inc.
A non-profit organization since 1982

Volume XXIII No. 2 May 2010

www.TortoiseGroup.org

Las Vegas, Nevada

Special Photo Edition



"Duke loves petunias" by P&P Patrick

Muddy River reaches its peak. The threatened desert tortoise also potentially occurs on the refuge. Make a day of it at this cool, tree-filled refuge north of town. Bring a picnic and a camera.

The refuge is about a one-hour drive from Las Vegas. Driving directions on page 4.



"Pokey eating Mexican Evening Primrose" by B. Burge

Field Trip Saturday May 8, 9 - 11 am
Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge
--see the endangered Moapa dace!



Endangered Moapa dace

The only place in the entire world to find this special fish, the Moapa dace, is right here in our back yard at the fragile habitat of the Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge. In May, movement of Moapa young from refuge streams of the main

Tip on Growing Primroses

Mexican Evening Primroses will grow like crazy and take over if given half a chance. A good solution is to put the plant in a pot. Tip the pot on its side when you want to give your tortoise a treat.

This method also works for a plant such as the Tufted Evening Primrose that the tortoise will eat up completely if you let it. Allow the tortoise to graze and then stand the pot upright before there's only a nub left!

Keep Your Tortoises from Escaping!
Call 739-8043 for good ideas

MegaDiet Corner

The Tortoise Group website offers an amazing wealth of information on MegaDiet. Check out some of these topics and many more at

<http://www.tortoisegroup.org/megadiet.html>

- Converting a Tortoise from Vegetables to MegaDiet
- What If My Tortoise Won't Eat MegaDiet?
- MegaDiet Ingredients
- MegaDiet Sellers in the Las Vegas Area
- What's Wrong with Feeding My Tortoise Sweet Fruit?

No access to the web? Send a self addressed stamped envelope stating which information you desire. Betty Burge, 5157 Poncho Circle, Las Vegas, NV 89119. (1 stamp/4 sheets of paper)

Creative Tips on Introducing MegaDiet

- Soften MegaDiet to cookie dough consistency. Try unsweetened apple sauce or liquefied lettuce instead of water
- Grate apple to juicy state to soften MegaDiet. Yum!
- Soften and roll up in a grape leaf, rose petal or other favorite leaf (not lettuce)
- Hollow out half a cherry tomato and fill with softened MegaDiet
- Soften and stud the surface thickly with rose petals or desert willow flowers.
- Go cold turkey. No muss, no fuss.
- Email your tips to Kathy at kutiger@embarqmail.com

Remember that these tips are to get your tortoise started on MegaDiet. Later, gradually lessen the apple or juice so your tortoise eats plain MegaDiet.

MegaDiet Factoid

Our tortoises ate 2 ½ tons of MegaDiet in 2009!

Have You or Your email Address Moved?

Please remember to send us your new physical and email address kutiger@embarqmail.com.

MegaDiet Satellite Sellers

Please call sellers for appointment

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Nellis & Owens | Georgi – 459 - 1274 |
| Decatur & Gowan | Toni – 277-6179 |
| 215 & Hualapai (new) | Lorrie – 528-5584 |
| Cheyenne & Durango | Susann – 205 -7576 |
| I-215 & Far Hills | |
| Kathy & Pauline – 804-0472, 9am – 7pm | |
| Rainbow & Alta | Kellie –353-5513 |
| 215 & Tropicana | Athena – 891-8585 |
| Tropicana & Maryland | Betty – 739-8043 |
| Dean Martin & Blue Diamond | |
| Carolyn – 876-0668, ext. 874 | |
| Eastern & Windmill | Patsy – 269-7108 |
| Silverado Ranch & S. Maryland Pkwy | |
| Helene – 878-7877 | |
| Boulder Hwy & Equestrian | |
| Gail – 334-0015 Cell | |
| Warm Springs & Lake Mead | |
| Gay – 563-1924 | |
| Boulder City (new) | Carol – 293-6494 |
| Pahrump | Sheri –775-727-5557 |
| Kingman, AZ | Toni – 928-757-8317 |

OnLine Store at:

<http://www.tortoisegroup.org/sales/intoshop.php>

No computer? Call Susan – 702-458-8382

A 1½ lb bag costing \$8.00 lasts a large desert tortoise about one month. MegaDiet is also sold at Tortoise Group meetings.

33% discount to TG members

Seeking Volunteers

- Charleston & Rancho
 - Green Valley
 - East & Southwest Las Vegas
- Call Betty at 739-8043

Tortoise Group Educates Hundreds in an EGG-citing Way! By Mindy Pretner

Hundreds of children and adults learned about tortoises at an EggStravaganza hosted by the Grace Baptist Church on April 3. More than 1000 people attended the event at Duane Keller Middle School on Sunrise Mountain. "Our main focus was to tell families to get tortoises to safety if they are found in the street and to call the Pet Desert Tortoise Hotline, 488-9422. So many families told of finding tortoises in the wild and keeping them as pets, not realizing that it's against the law to take a tortoise from the wild. And, they had no idea what a burrow was or what foods they should feed the tortoise!"



"Over 300 children take part in a coloring contest to win adorable stuffed tortoises" by M. Pretner

Jerry explained to families the importance of not releasing helium balloons into the air, relating how tortoises become tangled in the string or eat the brightly colored balloons that look like food.

Tortoise Group members Mindy Pretner, Jeremy Shugarman and Jerry Shupe interpreted informational tortoise posters for parents while the children colored tortoise pictures. Getting to meet Frieda and Freddy, the freeze-dried tortoises, was a big draw. At the end of the day, twelve children were thrilled to win stuffed tortoise animals, although they all REALLY wanted to take home Frieda!



"Max the tortoise discusses life with Spike while Costello watches from outside" by T. May

You Are a Tortoise Caretaker

Under federal law, desert tortoises belong to the government! We don't "own" them. Wow! We lucky people have the honor of caring for these exotic and special creatures. Tortoise Group, under permit from the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service (The Service) is the only organization permitted to adopt tortoises. The Service can make such a regulation because they are responsible for all desert tortoises in Nevada.

Want to learn more? Don't miss the May 15 meeting. Roy Averill-Murray, Desert Tortoise Recovery Coordinator for The Service, talks about recovery in Nevada. Also, the video is terrific!



"Eye Spy" with Maya by M. Yiatras

Plants for Your Tortoise photos by B. Burge



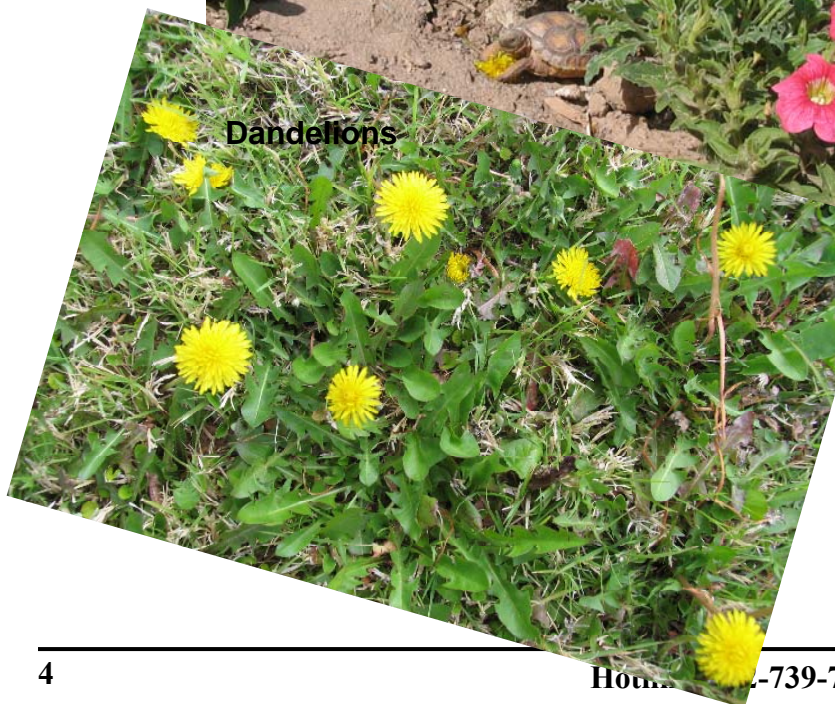
Native Tufted Evening Primrose



Yellow Bells



Petunias and Gazenias



Dandelions



Native Globe Mallow

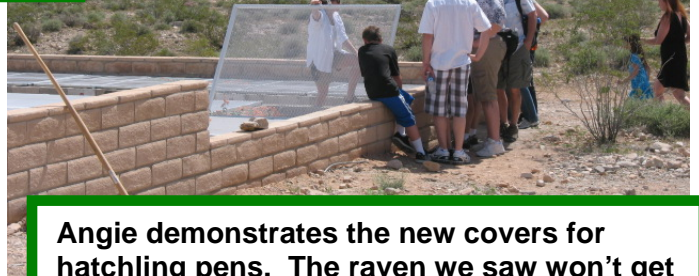
Field Trip to the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center April 18 by Kathy Utiger



Tortoise Group members gathered to listen as Dr. Paula Kahn, Conservation Program Manager, described the history of the Center, the wonderful support given by the San Diego, and many aspects of the day-to-day workings. We then split into three groups to tour the facility. It was a glorious day in the desert!



Paula says these pens require constant work.



Angie demonstrates the new covers for hatchling pens. The raven we saw won't get through this well-constructed barrier!

Rachel described caring for sick tortoises. (Infirmary in left rear building) Most of her patients had just been discharged!



Late Spring Events (all on Saturdays)

May 1, 10 am - noon

MegaDiet Bagging Day

**Location: The Center for Spiritual Living
6731 W. Alexander #101**

**(Corner Rainbow and Alexander, just east of
US95 between Craig and Cheyenne)**

Join the fun as we bag up a big fresh batch of
MegaDiet in our newly imprinted plastic bags!
Please email or call Kathy to let sign up: 804-0472
or kutiger@embarqmail.com . Adults only please.



"Duke enjoys his gazenias" by P&P Patrick

May 8, 9 - 11 am

Field Trip to:

Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge

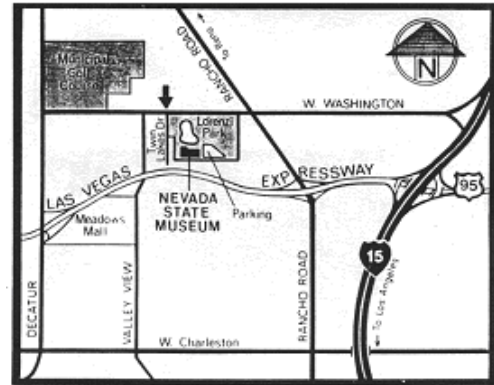
See the endangered Moapa dace fish in the lovely
surroundings of the Moapa Valley refuge. This
fragile habitat gem is located about 60 miles north
of Las Vegas near Glendale. See story on page 1.

Directions: From Las Vegas, drive north on I-15 to
Glendale (Exit 91). Go northwest on Highway 168 for
7.4 miles to Warm Springs Road. Turn left (southwest)
on Warm Springs Road and drive for 1.4 miles more.
The refuge is on your left where you see the chain link
fence capped with barbed wire on both sides of the road.
Allow at least one hour for the drive. Children welcome!

Call Kathy to sign up: 804-0472 or email
kutiger@embarqmail.com.

May & June Meetings

**Nevada State Museum in Lorenzi Park
700 Twin Lakes Drive LV 89107**



May 15, 1 - 3 pm

The Heat Is On:

Desert Tortoises and Survival

A Documentary Video

By Roy Averill-Murray, M.S.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Desert Tortoise Recovery Coordinator

Though the Mojave Desert tortoise has thrived in
the southwestern United States for thousands of
years, its population has severely declined over the
last four decades. A new USGS documentary
explains why this important indicator of desert
ecosystem health is declining and what scientists
are doing to save them.

Roy will show the video and then answer questions
on recovery of the desert tortoise in Nevada.

June 19, 1 - 3 pm

Tortoise Garden Edibles

By Don Fabbi, Master Gardener

Learn about plants that your tortoise will love and
how to plant and care for them. Dandelions, roses,
primroses — and which plants to avoid. Don will
discuss pesticide use and tips from owners. Bring
all your best stories and tips to share.

Desert Garden Center to Close Forever

Located on W. Charleston at the College, this wonderful source of native plants will shut its doors on May 31. While plants last, you can shop from 8 am – 2 pm every day.



"First Clover" with Maya by M. Yiatras

Why Isn't My Tortoise Using its Burrow?

Don't be concerned if your tortoise does not return to its burrow after a hard day of basking. The one thing a tortoise knows how to do is regulate its temperature by choosing places in the environment that does what the tortoise needs.

By early spring, the inside of the winter burrow has become quite cold. Now, your tortoise has started basking, slowly raising its body temperature by basking day after day. If the tortoise returned to the cold interior of the burrow, the tortoise would lose a lot of the heat its body had gained during the day. The burrow is colder than under a shrub or on the patio, or in the corner of the walls where the tortoise is doing its nighttime sleeping. So, in the morning, the tortoise is warmer than if it went into the burrow each night after a day in the sunshine.

Send your cute, colorful tortoise photos
to kutiger@embarqmail.com

----- Cut Here -----

Tortoise Group Membership Form

Memberships and contributions may be tax deductible

1. Please Print the COMPLETE address

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

2. Check One Newsletter Option 2010

- ☐ Send my newsletter in hard copy,
and send Tortoise Tips and other news by e-mail
- ☐ Send my newsletter by e-mail
- ☐ Send my newsletter in hard copy

3. Check amount for your 1-year membership

() \$15 () \$25 () \$35 () \$50 () \$75 () Life \$500

Special Contribution: _____

33% discount on MegaDiet and 10% on other Tortoise Group goodies to members and their immediate families

Make check payable to Tortoise Group. Mail with form to:
Tortoise Group ♦ 1001 Adobe Flat ♦ Henderson, NV 89011

Tortoise Group
5157 Poncho Circle
Las Vegas, NV 89119
702-739-8043

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The Tortoise Group newsletter is
published four times yearly:
March, May, July, and September

Late Spring Calendar for 2010

May 1: MegaDiet Bagging, 10 am - noon

We need your help! And it's a lot of fun, too..

May 8: Field Trip - Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge, 9 - 11 am

The endangered Moapa dace fish lives in the fragile habitat of the Moapa Valley refuge about 60 miles north of Las Vegas.

May 15: The Heat is On: Desert Tortoises and Survival, 1-3 pm

A documentary video and talk by Roy Averill-Murray

June 19: Tortoise Garden Edibles, 1-3 pm

Master Gardener Don Fabbi discusses plants for tortoises

Details on page 6

Material submitted to the Tortoise Group
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