



Habitat checklist - cool climate

You may wish to look at 'Creating a Tortoise Habitat' on our website, www.tortoisegroup.org, a presentation that shows the habitat features of eight yards in Las Vegas. You will also see lots of tips on tortoise care.

Yard

- ⚙ The recommended area for the tortoise is 600 square feet (for example, 30' x 20').
- ⚙ Some areas of shade and some of full sun.
- ⚙ Area must be fenced. Most people have block walls. Chain link and wrought iron must be faced with something 18" high that the tortoise cannot see through.
- ⚙ 12"-long stakes in the ground every 4" along perimeter to prevent digging out.
- ⚙ One-foot clear space around edge of the habitat for tortoise to walk.

Burrow *(the most important feature of the habitat)*

- ⚙ Drainage from roof and yard must not enter burrow.
- ⚙ Burrow is at least 5' from walls, sidewalks, and plants on all sides.
- ⚙ Burrow is located in a completely dry area at least 10' x 10'. This can be an aboveground or underground burrow.
- ⚙ Burrow opening does not face east or west (to avoid the hot summer sun).
- ⚙ Build using 'Cool Climate Burrow' instructions.

Brumation Location

- ⚙ A safe, indoor location maintained at 35-50°F.

Water

- ⚙ Build a Water Dish (p. 16 of the adoption & care booklet).
- ⚙ On our website, check 'Creating a Tortoise Habitat.'

Plants

- ⚙ Put in a variety of plants from our list so that the tortoise can browse.
- ⚙ Establish a 3' x 3' patch of grass that will be kept short.

Gate Barrier and Locking Gate

- ⚙ Install a Removable Gate Barrier.
- ⚙ Look for examples in 'Creating a Tortoise Habitat.'

Hazards

- ⚙ Tortoises can easily climb stacked Windsor blocks.
- ⚙ Check yard equipment, firewood, toys, etc.
- ⚙ A tortoise can crawl under or climb up on items and tip over or get stuck. This can easily lead to death.
- ⚙ Modify steps and other drop-offs.
- ⚙ Fence an open pool or pond.
- ⚙ Frisky, untrainable dogs can harm or kill a tortoise.
- ⚙ Block or cover open fences (like chain link).
- ⚙ A tortoise can stick an arm in and hurt the arm or nail.
- ⚙ Do not use pelletized fertilizer.
- ⚙ Watch for openings where a tortoise might become stuck and die in the heat.
- ⚙ Pick up litter.