

Quick Tip

Early Spring Care



Habitat Freshening

- Pick up little bits of plastic, paper, shiny things
- Check for any tortoise hazards
- Clean water dish
- Check irrigation
- Add new plants

Protect yummy little plants from a hungry tortoise

Tufted Evening Primrose (very yummy)

- After

(This is the one that survived!)



- With Protection



Emergence

- Varies from late February to late April or even early May
- Note date in log – tortoises go into and emerge from brumation at just about the same time every year
- Weigh tortoise right away for log

Behavior

- Several hours of basking
- May not start browsing for days or even weeks
- Wants to eat all those tender new leaves
- Feed the tortoise only after it starts browsing. Otherwise it's not ready to digest food.
- Enjoy watching your tortoise!

After it's up and browsing...

- Soak in a pan of shallow, lukewarm water.
Tortoise may drink for 20-30 minutes!
- Perform a medical checkup
 - Nares (nostrils) not bubbly?
 - Eyes clear and eyelids not puffy?
 - Shell looks good and free from ticks or other bugs?
(Never turn a female upside down to check under shell)
 - Muscles look firm and fat; tortoise is hefty
 - Use our Information Sheet for complete exam

As spring progresses

- Tortoise may sleep outside under a little shelter in early spring since the burrow temp is colder than the outside temp
- Lovely temperatures allow your tortoise to be outside most of the day browsing, basking, and eating a lot (may put on a growth ring)
- As the temp increases, tortoise:
 - Starts the day earlier
 - Spends less time basking to get to right temp
 - Seeks shelter sooner in the day

Plant Care

- Hollyhocks from Deb Forbush
- Plant with 2 inches of mulch
- Water with normal irrigation (daily in summer)
- Hollyhock seeds can last five years

Hollyhock care

- Left shows heavy mulch and only rainfall
- Right shows normal winter irrigation with little mulch
- Use mulch!



Dandelion vs Thistle

- Dandelion

Grows flat to ground



- Thistle

Grows upward, turns purple, spiky leaves



Dandelion vs Thistle



Mmmmm

