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 purply, spiky leaves
Dandelion vs Thistle
Mmmmm