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
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 and measure tortoise right away for log
- Take action if your tortoise has not emerged within about two weeks of its normal date – check the burrow, dig it up, call for Snooper
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. She may have eggs that could get stuck.)
- Muscles look firm and fat; tortoise is hefty
- Use our Information Sheet for a complete exam
- [http://screencast.com/t/z9xA9Bttm1A](http://screencast.com/t/z9xA9Bttm1A)
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
Young Plan Protection

- After browsing
  (This is the tufted evening primrose that survived!)

- With Protection
Dandelion vs Thistle

- **Dandelion**
  - Grows flat to ground

- **Thistle**
  - Grows upward, turns purply, spiky leaves
Finding Tortoise Care on Website

- **Planting**
  - Dandelions from seed
  - Spineless cactus
- **Marking Your Tortoise**
- **Medical Section**

- Please browse the Information Sheet section on our website
Mmmmm