Hatchling Birth

- Eggs are laid in May and June
- Incubation period is 90-120 days
- Hatchlings appear in late August and September
- Some may overwinter, appearing in spring
Hatchling Birth

- Remove shell stuck to skin with damp Q-Tip
- Hatchlings’ skin naturally flakes—don’t pull it off!!
- **Factoid:** Hatchlings can travel up to 1/3 mile before brumation
General Hatching Care

• Hatchlings, like all tortoises, **must live outside**
• Need a safe habitat with
  – Burrow
  – Growing food
  – MegaDiet 2-3 times/week
  – Water
• Hatchlings brumate, too
• No terrariums!
• In the wild, the hatchling is ready to live outside on its own
Things to Think About

• Hatchlings are difficult to raise (die easily)
• They need more area than you would think (100 square feet minimum-5’ x 20’)
• If you have more than one hatchling, eventually you will have the problem of fighting or mating. You will have to give one away or create separate habitats
Selecting a Habitat Site

- Lots of sunlight
- Avoid narrow side of house because
  - Heat collects there
  - Often it’s a drainage area from roof or back yard
- Not against wall (heat collector)
- Dry area with space around it
Building the Habitat
Habitat Specs

• Make the area long rather than square
  – Dry and wet areas at opposite ends
  – Nicer for tortoise to walk a long way

• Create walls an escape-artist hatchling:
  – Cannot see through
  – Cannot climb out of
  – Cannot fall into
  – Cannot climb the corners with those needle-like claws
Hatchling Habitat

Dry End with Burrows

Wet End Has Growing Food
Hazards

• Grass - They can become high-centered
• Birds or cats may snatch them. You can create a removable top frame from chicken wire, plastic fencing, and various other materials
• Dogs, children, adult burrows, adult water dish
• Tortoises walk the edges. Keep edges clear of even small rocks, twigs, or weeds
• Pay special attention to anything in the habitat that could flip a tortoise over, trap it, or that it could fall off of
Teach your little one to browse, just like an adult. Have growing food available.

Offer MegaDiet only 2-3 times weekly. Especially important for the calcium

Note: Fast growth is not healthy