

Testudo marginata



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Legislation: included in Appendix II CITES, Annex A

Origin: Italy (Sardinia, Tuscany, Calabria) and Albania

Habitat: pine forests, hilly areas, wooded areas

Characteristics: can reach and exceed 40 cm in length. A peculiar characteristic of this species is the "bell tower" of the carapace in the posterior portion and the unsupradal suprachal shield. The colour of the carapace is dark with lighter edges on the scuti. On every single scute of the plastron there is a triangular black spot.



Dimorphism: the size differences are not as obvious as in other species; the males have a narrowing in the middle of the carapace and the plastron is quite concave, with a longer and wider tail at the base and the cloacal opening outside the carapace margins.

The females have a flat plate.

Breeding in United Kingdom:

In Mediterranean areas this specimen can live outdoors all year. In this country, due to the peculiarity of the weather, more attention is required for breeding.

The ideal condition would be an enclosed garden (burying the net to prevent escaping), with many plants, hiding places and shaded areas. Watch out for potential predators such as foxes, rats and dogs; (cats are not usually a problem). Do not forget a bowl of water that should be changed daily. In the cold season controlled lethargy is recommended of about 3-4 months; this could be in a vivarium placed indoors, such as in a garage or shed, to protect the animal from too severe temperatures and high humidity. A safe alternative could also be a fridge: this guarantees constant humidity and a temperature of 4°C. During hibernation weigh your animal every 3-4 weeks, to assess the correct sleeping period.

One month before and 2-3 weeks after hibernation it is a good idea to take your tortoise to an exotic Vet for a complete check up. Remember to bring a faecal sample to test for intestinal parasites.

Diet: *herbivorous*

90% will be made up of "grass", while the remaining 10% will consist of fruit and vegetables. For example, you could plant directly in the enclosure plants on which the animal feeds freely so they are always fresh (dandelion, plantain, mallow, chicory, hibiscus); the diet can be supplemented daily by administering other vegetables. Hay must always be available. **A correct and balanced diet is the best way to prevent malformations during growth.**

Plants that should not be present in the garden and accessible to the animal include: ranunculus, oleander, ivy, ferns.

Never administer: food for dogs and cats, bread, pasta, legumes, bananas, citrus fruits, milk and dairy products, animal origin food .

Free App: available on the major app stores "**The tortoise table**".

