

Testudo horsfieldii



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Legislation: included in the Appendix II CITES

Origin: Russia, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Western China.

Habitat: dry and arid, desert areas with scant vegetation, but prefer prairies.

Characteristics: it can measure up to 15-22 cm on average. The carapace is rounded and flattened and is a yellow-brown colour with the edges of darker scuti. The plastron can be characterized by roundish black spots on every single scute. Supacaudal scuto is unique.



Dimorphism: the males are smaller with quite a concave plinth, the tail is longer and wider at the base and the cloacal exchange is outside the edges of the carapace.

The females, as well as being larger, have a flat plate and a shorter and thinner tail and the anal scuti opening is narrower.

Breeding: it is not recommended to hibernate outside; this is because humidity rates are much higher than in the areas of origin.

During the warm season, however, the animal can be placed in a fenced area, well exposed to the sun, with plants and hiding places, outside the house. As they are able to dig, to prevent escape you should bury part of the fencing.

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 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**".

