

Russian Tortoise

Agrionemys Horsfieldii

Russian tortoises are a woodland tortoise that can reach 8-inches for females. Males will stay smaller, 5-inches. They hibernate when kept outdoors, and develop different complications when kept too humid or tropical. They are one of the spunkier small tortoises in the pet trade. They are usually very bold, and very active as a species. They are also great first tortoises because they are relatively hardy.

Housing

Hatchlings, 2"- 4" in length, can be kept easily in **2'Wx12"Lx12"H**. Adults thrive in **5'Wx3'Lx2'H** enclosures or larger. It is always suggested that with more than one animal, you must think bigger than five-foot.

Most substrates that one can find in their backyard works very well on these tortoises. Mixing multiple types incorporates all of the positive aspects into one.

Soil, leaf litter, grass cuttings, mulch, aspen shavings.

They need a water dish, with water changes daily. When deciding what dish to use, make sure it's something your tortoise can easily crawl into. For hatchlings, you have very flat, small-lipped containers that they don't fall into. And, you want the water level to **ONLY** reach half way up their shell so they don't drown when fully inside. Tortoises do like hides. They need an area where they can escape the light if they choose to.

Temperatures

Daytime

95°F (hot side) and 70°F (cool side)

Nighttime

65°F is a good *minimum* nighttime temperature. This can be easily accomplished with an **UNDER** the tank heat pad under the area they go to sleep in.

Russians are relatively hardy, but they can be unforgiving to sudden drops in temperature. Many complications can surface, like respiratory issues. There are no long-term studies indicating health issues coming about when one does not brumate their tortoises. Brumation should be left to breeding situations, only when the animal in question is outside where it naturally and slowly occurs. Brumation is very difficult to accurately induce indoors.

Infrared Temperature Guns are very beneficial in keeping a healthy enclosure; they read the momentary surface and air temperatures. I highly recommend you invest in one.

UVB

ALL Tortoises need UVB florescent bulbs if they are not receiving natural (unfiltered) sunlight. UVB bulbs include;

Repti-sun 10.0, Power-suns 100 watts, Arcadia D3 + 10% T5 HO

Supplementation will be addressed later, and it provides vitamin D3 along with calcium.

Food

Russian tortoises base diet is green vegetables.

Endive, escarole, dandelion greens, shredded cactus pads, baby kale, red leaf, green leaf, arugula and chicory leaf, oak leaf, mizuna, mustard leaf, frisee, berry leaves, grape leaves, radish greens

Root veggies, shredded, will add variety into their diet. Usually, I feed these out two to three times a week.

Yellow squash, banana squash, zucchini, yams or sun burst squash

There is a very large variety of flowers that are non-toxic. You must be aware of the source of your flowers. Food-grade flowers are hard to find. They must be non-fertilized and fully organic. Runoff from contaminated water can leach pesticides into the flowers.

Dandelion Flowers, Hibiscus, Roses, Dendrobium Sp. Of Orchid, Pansies, Carnations

Fruit should be fed moderately. Fruit is a treat. This between 10% of their diet. Fruit with a higher concentration of sugar and vitamin C should be fed in fewer quantities because it can cause diarrhea in high doses.

Some fruit has a high percentage of acid. Oranges, lemons and limes should be *avoided* completely.

Berries, Bell pepper, Tomatoes, Peaches and Nectarines, Watermelon, Mango, Cantaloupe

Do Not feed spinach, parsley, chard, iceberg lettuce or broccoli.

Do Not feed animal based protein (dog or cat food, bugs, meat)

Supplementation

Supplementation needs to be a Calcium (1.5% per serving) + Vitamin D3 (3,000 IU/KG)

Repashy Grassland Grazers, Zoo Med Repti Calcium *with* D3, Mazuri tortoise diet (soaked), Repashy Superveggies

Furthermore, if your tortoise has watery eyes or nose, or is becoming soft, give us a call. We are here to answer your questions so you can have the best experience with your new family member.