

SETTING UP A TORTOISE HABITAT

When I obtained my first desert tortoise, I had no idea how to take care of it and what type of habitat would be proper. After joining NTTTS and talking to many members, I was finally able to devise a habitat that I feel is suitable and comfortable for my tortoises. To keep everyone from “re-inventing the wheel,” I will share some ideas.



First and foremost, the habitat must be protected from dogs. I have enclosed my habitat with a 3 ft. high chain link fence. When planning your habitat pick an area with some shade and if you have a pool, the tortoises must be isolated from it. Build your enclosure around a tree if possible.

Create burrows for shelter from the sun and rain. A large clay or plastic pot cut in half and covered with dirt makes a nice burrow and it's easy! Add some boulders to block part of the opening and create a sense of security. Also include a shallow saucer for water.



Provide a grassy grazing area. Also line the perimeter with a visual barrier. 2x8 to 2x12 lumber works well depending on the size of your animals.

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If you have more than one species, they must be housed in separate habitats. Concrete block makes a good barrier and.....

It can also be used as a planter for vegetables, roses, hibiscus, ruellia and other edibles. Fill the holes in the block with dirt and mulch and run a drip line along the top for watering.



I made it easy to maintain the “garden” by installing a watering system and timer. All that’s left to do is clean up the droppings daily.

Don’t forget to include some cactus of the spineless variety.

