



## CARE SHEET

### Yellow Footed Tortoise *Chelonoidis denticulata*



The Yellow Footed Tortoise is sometimes known as the Giant Brazilian Tortoise or simply the Big Tortoise. It is the largest tortoise species found in South America, normally growing to around 14 inches, but some growing as large as 28 inches long. The measurement is the carapace length (back shell) as measured in a straight line (not curved over the apex of the carapace).

They have brown skin and carapace with yellow to orange markings on the carapace, head and unsurprisingly, the legs and feet.

#### Housing

*Chelonoidis denticulata* are a terrestrial rainforest species of tortoise, they love a warm humid atmosphere. A young specimen requires an enclosure 2 feet x 3 feet with walls in excess of 12 inches to prevent climbing and escape. An adult will require a minimum of 4 feet x 8 feet, a greenhouse could be ideal. Substrate should be moss with sand or topsoil to maintain humidity levels. A water dish is required that is large enough for the tortoise to climb into and soak, but never so deep as the tortoise can't climb out or could drown.

A basking area is required so that the animals can regulate their temperature and UV light absorption. The warm end of the enclosure should be around 32°C the cool end should never be below 18°C

A hide, or several, are required around the enclosure to make the tortoise feel secure.

This species DOES NOT hibernate, and this should not be attempted.

#### Heat and light

UVB and UVA (heat) are both required to maintain correct internal temperatures and synthesis of vitamin D3 and calcium. UVB can be achieved using screw in bulb type UVB lamps or the longer T8 tubes. A UVB of 5% (5.0) – to 10% (10.0) should be provide. Replace UVB bulbs at least every 12 months. A ceramic heat emitter or normal basking bulb can provide UVA and heat. Wattage depends on distance from basking area. The basking area should be 35-40°C under the heat lamp. Avoid coloured bulbs and use only those closest to the natural spectrum. The lights should be set to a timer to provide 10-12 hours of light per day during natural hours. If the enclosure gets cold at night a ceramic heat emitter or heat mats can keep the temperature above 18°C

#### Diet

*Chelonoidis denticulata* are an omnivorous species, eating plant and prey matter. In captivity their main part of their diet will consist of greens such as red and green lettuce (not spinach or iceberg) turnip greens, and weeds like dandelion and plantain. They can also eat more fruit than other species of turtles and will take berries, mango, papaya, plums etc. Variation is key and a piece of cuttlebone should be provided at all times for calcium and to keep the beak trim. Protein items such as earthworms and pinkie mice should be offered no more than 2 to 4 times a month.

This guide is meant to be a quick reference/starter guide and does not replace more in-depth research on this species. Always ensure that you know the correct care needs for your animal.



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Written by Dudley Pinson ©The Turtle Emporium 2020