

PISCES

PET EMPORIUM



Photo by Pisces Pet Emporium

Box Turtles

Cuora sp., Pyxidea sp., Terrapene sp.

Lifespan: Up to 40 years.

Size: 8 to 10 inches.

Sexing: Males have an extremely concave plastron, and some have a constricted “waist” that gives them a peanut shape. Females usually have a flat plastron though some can be slightly concave. Females’ eyes are also generally lighter than males.

Enclosure: A 6’ x 2’ x 2’ aquarium is required for adult turtles.

Hiding/Climbing Spots: Box Turtles need at least one hiding spot, preferably filled with moss to increase humidity.

Humidity: The enclosure should be well ventilated and misted well to keep the humidity high (60% to 80%) and to aid the process of shedding and prevent health problems. Use a hygrometer to maintain a constant humidity level.

Substrate: **Substrate:** A mix of bark pieces and peat moss is best. This must be cleaned regularly to prevent health problems. ***Pisces recommends: ExoTerra Plantation Soil.***

Heat: Maintain a temperature of as low as 21 °C (70 °F) at night to as high as 32 °C (90 °F) during the day. Use a heat bulb on one portion of the tank so the animal can escape the warm area if they need to. ***Pisces recommends: ExoTerra bulbs and fixtures.***

UV Lighting: Use of a full spectrum 5.0 bulb for 12 hours per day is required. Fluorescent bulbs lose effectiveness and need to be replaced every 6-8 months.

Feeding: Feed a daily diet of 85% fibrous vegetables, 10% fruits and 5% protein. Protein can consist of earthworms, mealworms, crickets, etc. Protein is an important part of a young tortoise’s diet, but it is equally important not to feed too much protein. Too much protein in the tortoise’s diet can lead to malnutrition, stunted growth, and improper shell growth and can lead to the death of the box turtle.

Vitamins & Supplements: Calcium is a very important part of a tortoise's diet. Be sure to add a calcium supplement to your tortoise's food 2-3 times per week. Powdered supplements can be sprinkled over the vegetables. ***Pisces recommends: Repashy SuperVeggie Herbavore All-In-One Vitamin.***

Handling: Turtles can be handled occasionally but since they are very fragile do not hold them high off the ground and always hold them horizontally.

Safe Handling of Reptiles*: As with all living creatures, reptiles can carry microorganisms (including Salmonella) which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet reptile roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

Recommended Books: Pisces recommends *Tortoises and Box Turtles* (Barron's Books).

Recommended Supplies:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Glass terrarium (with a large footprint) ❑ Screen top ❑ Plants (live or artificial) ❑ Hiding cave ❑ Misting bottle ❑ Peat Moss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Heat Bulb & Fixture ❑ Fluorescent Light & Fixture ❑ Rep-Cal Herptivite Multi-Vitamin ❑ Rep-Cal Calcium Supplement ❑ Thermometer ❑ Hygrometer |
|---|---|

Your New Pet: It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness.

Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat.

A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.



4921 Skyline Way N.E.
 Calgary, Alberta T2E 4G5
 Phone: (403) 274-3314 Fax: (403) 275-6296
www.piscespets.com
 Email: pisces@piscespets.com

Reprint of this handout only with permission of and full credit to Pisces Pet Emporium
 *Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada