



info@aeacarizona.com

Address: 7 E. Palo Verde St.,
Suite #1
Gilbert, AZ 85296

<http://www.aeacarizona.com>

Phone: (480) 706-8478
Fax: (480) 393-3915
Emergencies: Page (602) 351-1850

Redfoot Tortoise Care

Basic Information

The Redfoot tortoise is also called the Redleg tortoise, or the Savanna tortoise. This South American tortoise is the most common tortoise available in pet shops. The natural habitat of this animal is savanna areas and scrubby grasslands, although it is sometimes found in deep forests.

Description

Redfoot tortoises are identified by large yellow head scales and orange-red scales on the limbs and tail. The shell is slightly elongated from very dark brown to black. The central parts of the laminae are yellowish. Redlegs reach maturity at 10-12 inches with a maximum length of 18 inches. Adults may weigh up to 30 pounds.

Cage Environment

These tortoises are from very warm climates and do not hibernate under normal conditions. They do best if kept all year at temperatures of 75-90 degrees Fahrenheit. An area should be provided that is of a constant 80-85 degrees, which the tortoise can go to and adjust its body temperature. They should be kept indoors and active in winter, preferably in a heated terrarium. In the summer, they may be left outside unless temperatures exceed 105 degrees or go below 70 degrees. They can stand more severe temperatures, but problems may arise with respiratory ailments or at a high temperature, heat strokes.

Redlegs need water to drink and bathe in, preferably at all times and at least every other day. Because they are from an area with high humidity, they seem to rapidly dehydrate, even with moist foods being offered. Therefore, water is always important. Any newly acquired specimen should be given a long drink and bath immediately upon acquisition; bathing them also helps to eliminate waste material.

Food

These tortoises eat the largest variety of foods of seemingly any tortoise in existence. A good list consists of the following: All fruits and vegetables both fresh and cooked, eggs, lean meat, canned dog food and dry dog and cat food moistened, and cottage cheese. The fruits include apples, pears, peaches, apricots, bananas, grapes, papayas, cantaloupe, watermelon, and other melons. Vegetables include both fresh and fresh frozen with a favorite being corn on the cob, romaine lettuce, other lettuce types, mustard greens, celery, squash, tomatoes, chard



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and carrot (cooked or grated). Feeding will take place at any time of the day or night if light is provided and other factors such as heat and water are met, as these tortoises have prodigious appetites. They should be kept with other aggressive tortoises of like size.

The Redfoot tortoise is one of the hardiest tortoises to captive raise or keep and offers few problems. They are good around children and are very intelligent and can offer the advantage of reaching a fair size in a relatively short time. They may grow to adulthood size in 15 years or so if optimum growth occurs.