



The Tortoise Sanctuary

International Tortoise Association
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Guidance Document

General Care :

As usual, and I find this very distressing, the most tortoise injuries we see are from dog attacks. It is not just the very severe bites, but it is the shaking that the dog does whilst attacking the tortoise that causes the damage. Very few survive, and I constantly warn people to beware of this (even the best tempered dog can do this). Please remember it is illegal to keep an animal in close proximity to a predator and prosecutions could arise.

Other incidents occurring all too frequently basically boil down to bad animal husbandry. Just because the tortoise is out in the garden this does not necessarily mean it is thriving. Weigh your tortoise regularly and bathe it often to keep fly strike away. Check eyes, mouth and cloaca regularly and don't keep different species together. Stress constitutes ill health —Make sure a male tortoise does not bother the female unduly and always provide egg laying facilities. Tortoise should not be kept on patios or concrete without access to grass or indoors permanently. It is sad to see tortoise shut in vivariums constantly in flats or houses without grass access this according to the new law is illegal.

Vivariums— although excellent if used properly, we are seeing deaths through the tortoise flipping over under the lights or accelerated growth and ridges through being in a vivarium constantly without grass or fresh air access.

Chest infections and runny nose increases at the end of summer before hibernation, and if a tortoise is put into hibernation with either could mean death. As the tortoise comes out of hibernation , this is the time to use your back-up system of heat/light and uvb. If left out in our so called “spring” days cold weather could kill.