

# Hatchling Care and Brumation

## Hatchling Birth

- Eggs are laid in May and June
- Incubation period is 90-120 days
- Hatchlings appear in late August and September
- Some may overwinter, appearing in spring
- Remove shell stuck to skin with damp Q-Tip
- Hatchlings' skin naturally flakes—don't pull it off!
- Hatchlings can travel up to 1/3 mile before brumation.

## General Hatchling Care

- Hatchlings, like all tortoises, must live outside
- Need a safe habitat with a burrow, growing food, MegaDiet 2-3 times a week, and water.
- Offer MegaDiet only 2-3 times weekly. Especially important for the calcium.
- Hatchlings brumate, too
- No terrariums!
- Hatchlings are difficult to raise (die easily)
- They need more area than you would think (100 square feet minimum-5' x 20').
- If you have more than one hatchling, eventually you will have the problem of fighting or mating. You will have to give one away or create separate habitats.
- Fast growth is not healthy

## Hazards

- Grass - They can become high-centered
- Birds or cats may snatch them. You can create a removable top frame from chicken wire, plastic fencing, and various other materials
- Dogs, children, adult burrows, adult water dish
- Tortoises walk the edges. Keep edges clear of even small rocks, twigs, or weeds •
- Pay special attention to anything in the habitat that could flip a tortoise over, trap it, or that it could fall off of.

## Selecting Habitat Site:

- Lots of sunlight
- Avoid narrow side of house because heat collects there and often it's a drainage area from roof or back yard.
- Not against wall (heat collector).
- Dry area with space around it.

## Habitat Specs

- Make the area long rather than square
- Dry and wet areas at opposite ends
- Create walls to prevent escaping:
- **Cannot see through**
- **Cannot climb out of**
- **Cannot fall into**
- **Cannot climb the corners with those needle-like claws.**



**Wet End with water and food**



**Dry End with Burrows**