



# TORTOISE GROUP

## Plants to grow for desert tortoises

### Annuals

**Petunia** - *Petunia hybrida*  
**Nasturtium** - *Tropaeolum spp.*  
Plant from seed.  
**Pansy** - *Viola spp.*  
**Portulaca (Moss Rose)**-  
*Portulaca grandiflora*

### Trees

**Elm** - *Ulmus spp*  
**Mulberry** - *Morus spp*  
Only offer young  
leaves

### Grasses

**Bermuda** - common  
preferred not hybrid  
**Timothy Hay** - *phleum  
pretense*

### Ground Cover

**White Clover** -  
*trifolium repens*

### Perennial Ornamentals

**Primrose** - *Oenothera*, species including:

**Mexican Evening Primrose** - *O. berlandieri*. Somewhat invasive, surround with several feet of dry soil.

**Yellow Creeping Primrose** - *O. stubbei* Somewhat invasive, surround with several feet of dry soil (native of NM/AZ).

**White Evening Primrose** - *O. pallida*.

**Tufted Evening Primrose** - *O. caespitosa*. Reseeds readily.

**Ivy Geranium** - *Pelargonium pelatum*. Has a trailing habit if within reach of tortoises.

**Gazania** - *Gazania spp.* Somewhat spreading, large, daisy-like flowers, various colors.

**Hollyhock** - *Alcea rosea*. Leaves and flowers

### Shrubs

**Desert Willow** - *Chilopsis linearis*. Tall open shrub, low branching, purple flowers spring through fall.

**Rose** - *Rosa spp.* Leaves and flowers.

**Hibiscus** - *Hibiscus spp.* Usually needs protection in winter. Large pot on patio usually works.

**Yellow Bells or Trumpets** - *Stenolobium* (or *Tecoma*) *stans*. Broad-leaf variety. Not a vine. Many large flowers, spring and summer.

**Spineless Cactus** - *Opuntia ficus-indica*. Offer new pads, only; flowers, fruit--prickly pears.

**Globe Mallow** - *Sphaeralcea spp.* Native species with spikes of coral-colored flowers in early spring.

### Vines

**Hall's Honeysuckle**- (Set base of trellis away from wall to make a shady place)

**Grape** - *Vitis spp.* Offer young leaves only, no fruit. Thompson Seedless preferred.

**Morning Glory** - *Ipomoea spp.*  
Perennial vine. Large dark purple flowers, not in full sun.

**Virginia Creeper** - *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*.

### “Good” Weeds

**Dandelion** -  
*Taraxacum officinale*.  
Important food plant,  
especially for  
hatchlings.

**Filaree or Heron's Bill**  
- *Erodium cicutarium*.  
Germinates in winter,  
feathery leaves, tiny  
purple flowers.

### Toxic Plants - also see online

**Rhubarb**, *Rheum rhabarbarum*.  
Leaves

**Tomato** - *Lycopersicon spp.* Only  
the leaves and plant are toxic

**Chinaberry Tree** - *Melia azederach  
umbracalifera*. Leaves and fruit  
must be kept off irrigated grass

**Oleander** - *Nerium oleander*.  
Leaves and flowers. Tortoises often  
ignore what falls.