

July 2009 Editor's Note

Welcome to our special tortoise issue.

By Russ Case

We have published special issues devoted to turtles, amphibians, lizards and snakes, so it was only a matter of time before we got around to doing one on tortoises. I think you'll find it worth the wait.

Tortoises make some of the very best reptile pets. They are perceived, more so than many reptiles, as being very gentle and mellow — and rightfully so. Of course, if you've ever seen a couple of males battling over breeding rights, you know they can get pretty grumpy. But for the most part they are gentle animals, and they can be curious and personable. Tortoises have so many devout fans for good reason.

However, their full pet potential will be realized only if you provide them with the care they need. Tortoises really benefit from being kept outside as much as possible. If you've been meaning to build such a pen but just didn't know how to go about it, ReptileChannel.com can help you out. You'll find instructions at ReptileChannel.com/BuildAPen.

Besides keeping tortoises outdoors, providing them with a healthy diet (including nutritious grasses, greens, weeds, some flowers and manufactured diets) goes a long way in ensuring their health. We've got a video on that topic, too. Watch it at ReptileChannel.com/TortVideo.

There's also a good chance, unlike some other herps, a tortoise will outlive you. The family featured in this month's "Living With Reptiles" knows that to be true. What will happen to your tortoise when you can no longer care for it? Do your tortoises a favor, and lay some groundwork to ensure your pet is taken care of until the end of its life.

Inside you'll also find articles on red- and yellow-footed tortoises, golden Greeks, pancake tortoises, breeding elongated tortoises, and so much more.