

Radiated Tortoise

Astrochelys radiata



A large beautifully 'star patterned' Madagascan species.

Size Growing to roughly 16 inches carapace length and weighing approximately 16 kg.

Natural Range Southern Madagascar, unfortunately, they are critically endangered in their homelands.

Diet They thrive with access to large grazing areas providing multiple wild plant species Ours go out all summer into a fenced paddock to graze a large field of native grasses and weeds. (check out our herbivore Diet sheet)

They enjoy a wide range of plant matter including grasses and especially enjoying cacti pads and a little fruit including mushrooms. We provide hay throughout the winter too to ensure they have a high fibre diet.

Indoor Enclosure A large tortoise table with sturdy water bowls and décor as they are powerful, it's difficult to provide live plants as part of their décor as they tend to run them over and then eat them. 😊

Substrate Coconut coir base with a top layer of chunky bark works well for our group and helps retain some humidity too.

Temperature Basking temperature around 90F full spectrum lighting, we use both MVB and T5 high output reptile bulbs.

Outdoor enclosure Our radiated tortoises have access to a secure building to retreat into at night with heating controlled by a thermostat. We provide access to large water dishes as they drink large volumes of water.

Behaviour Gentle giants, a calm, peaceful and surprisingly hardy species. These tortoises really enjoy the rainfall raising their whole bodies off the ground as high as they can in a happy response. We can get the same response by sprinkling them with warmish water from a watering can.

As striking as these tortoises are its unbelievable how their stunningly attractive shell serves them for the perfect camouflage. Many a time have we been out locating each one in their grazing field to help them to their night building and walked past them multiple times as they sit motionless in the tall grasses-we have literally bumped into them before realising where they are hidden.

Thankfully now many Keepers are increasingly raising captive bred specimens globally.



Written by Louise Bonser

Prairie Hills Tortoises