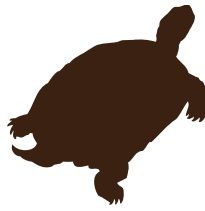


CARE SHEET



BCG

BRITISH CHELONIA GROUP

PATRON: PROFESSOR DAVID J. BELLAMY OBE

THE RADIATED TORTOISE

(Astrochelys radiata)



You can obtain further information on tortoise and terrapin care by consulting our website: www.britishcheloniagroup.org.uk or by writing to:

THE BRITISH CHELONIA GROUP
Membership and General Enquiries
P.O. Box 16216, Tamworth, Staffs. B77 9LA.

Please enclose an SAE

For tortoise, terrapin and turtle care and conservation.

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The British Chelonia Group. Registered Office: New Barn Farmhouse, Toft Road, Kingston, Cambs. CB23 2NS
www.britishcheloniagroup.org.uk

HABITAT: The spiny forests and woodland of southern Madagascar.

FEATURES: The Radiated Tortoise has striking yellow/white lines radiating over a highly domed black shell. Males may be slightly smaller than females, which can grow to 38 cm (16 inches) plastron length and weigh up to 16 kilos (about 35 lbs). Juveniles are beautifully marked. They feed actively for part of the year and remain buried in debris during cooler periods. These tortoises are long-lived, typically 60-80 years and taking 20 years to reach maturity. Courtship and mating are gentle and occur seasonally after rain (September to March), with several clutches of 8-22 eggs laid six to eight weeks apart in a shallow nest. The large spherical white eggs hatch after a comparatively short incubation of 50 to 70 days.

FEEDING:

Native: This tortoise is famous for eating spiny *Opuntia* cactus pads and other plants typical of its dry sandy habitat. Small dead vertebrates and insects may be scavenged.

Captive: These tortoises need a high fibre calcium-rich diet. They will graze on a lawn and eat a wide variety of green plants including succulents such as ice plants, sedums, aloe vera, Christmas cactus and yucca; many flowering plants such as dandelion, mallow, hollyhock, plantain, soft thistles, clover, marigolds and roses; green vegetables, vines and salad leaves (be sparing with brassicas); and various fruits in limited quantities, such as melon, squash, strawberry, apple and mango. Fibrous plants should predominate and extra calcium can be provided by supplying calcium carbonate powder or adding a proprietary vitamin/mineral supplement to the food.

HUSBANDRY HINTS FOR CAPTIVE RADIATED TORTOISES IN BRITAIN:

These tortoises need spacious accommodation so a large heated greenhouse is ideal, either with direct access to a grazing area or with a separate secure outdoor enclosure for maximum exposure to sunlight. An outdoor run should include a waterproof shelter plus a shaded area, with fresh water always available. A shallow pool is ideal for adults. When inside, a UV lamp as well as a heat lamp will be needed. They require daytime temperatures of 21-32°C (70-90°F) which should not drop below 15°C (60°F) at night. Hatchlings in a vivarium should have a temperature gradient of 21-35°C (70-95°F) with a shelter and a water dish. This species of tortoise should not be hibernated.

Revised August 2018