

HEALTHY TORTOISE FOOD

Tortoises should eat more plants than just dandelions and clover; it is very important to give as much healthy variety in the diet of any tortoise, eg dandelions are a firm favourite of Mediterranean tortoises, but they are also a diuretic and if fed in large amounts to very young tortoises, it is now believed that they can lead to bladder stones. **Avoid vegetable, salad and fruit items** if possible, as they offer little nutritional value and can very often become lethal if fed regularly. Always dust a tortoise's meal with calcium supplement, and give regular access to UV light and vitamin supplement, eg. **Nutrobal**

SOME PLANTS AND WEEDS THAT ARE SUITABLE TO FEED A MEDITERRANEAN TORTOISE

WILD FOODS (Pick or grow from tortoise seed mixes)

- PLANTAINS (ALL VARIETIES)
- SMOOTH SOW THISTLE
- PRICKLY SOW THISTLE
- VETCHES
- WHITE/RED DEAD NETTLE
- CORN POPPY
- TOADFLAX
- COMMON, MUSK, MALLOW
- CHICKWEED
- BINDWEEDS
- TREFOILS
- GOOSE GRASS (sticky weed)
- WILD ROCKET
- DANDELION
- WHITE/RED CLOVER
- HAWKBIT
- CATS EARS
- SOFT COMFREY
- HEARTSEASE (viola's)
- GOATSBEARD
- SMOOTH HAWK'S BEARD
- NIPPLEWORT
- CHICORY
- SHEPHERDS PURSE
- SPEEDWELLS
- CRANE BILL
- BITTERCRESS
- HEDGE BEDSTRAW
- FIELD, HEDGE & GARLIC MUSTARD
- BRAMBLE LEAVES (young shoots)
- EVENING PRIMROSE
- GRAPE VINE LEAVES
- SEDUMS
- MALVA
- VIOLA/PANSEY
- CAMPANULAS
- BUDDLEIA
- OPUNTIA CACTUS (prickly pear)
- HIBISCUS
- MULBERRY LEAVES
- ROSE PETALS & LEAVES
- ALOE VERA (small amounts)
- WILD STRAWBERRY
- HEBE
- MARIGOLD
- NASTURTIUM
- FUSCHIA
- CORNFLOWER
- GERANIUM PERENNIAL SPECIES
- HOSTA

GARDEN PLANTS *leaves and flowers!*

(Order from any good garden centre or online)

TOP TIP FOR LEARNING NEW PLANTS: If you are not sure what a plant looks like, use an illustrated wildflower book or 'Google Image' internet tool to see picture examples of the many edible plants which are good for tortoises to eat.

HOW TO CHANGE DIET: please remember tortoises will often choose unhealthy junk food over healthy, given a chance. Tortoises will always convert to healthy food given time. Ideally introduce with an ever increasing normal diet, then remove junk food entirely and offer a good healthy variety daily. Re training a tortoise to eat a healthy variety requires regular offerings. Help and advice is available from club upon request.

There is a lot of further information and help on tortoise diet and care online, or through your local club www.tortoiseclub.org. Further information on edible plants can be found at www.thetortoisetable.co.uk

As well as buying edible plants from your local garden centres or companies such as www.wildflowers.co.uk, you can also grow edible plants in your garden from seed. Plant mixes are available online and through tortoise club. If occasional food needs to be bought, herb based leaves, rocket, lamb's lettuce and water cress are best. Mixes must not contain spinach, cabbage family or beetroot leaves. These items will never contain as much fibre and goodness as natural plants so only feed when essential and as small part of a varied diet.

EXAMPLES OF **CLASSIC DANGEROUSLY BAD JUNK FOOD:** cabbage family, kale, broccoli, bean family, spinach, corn, ANY fruit, milk (dairy), meat, bread/cake /biscuits. The following are only **GOOD FOR WATER CONTENT:** cucumber, tomatoes and iceberg lettuce.