

Zilla

WHERE REPTILES RULE®

AQUATIC TURTLE KIT SETUP & CARE GUIDE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
TO SETUP YOUR TERRARIUM
AND CARE FOR AQUATIC TURTLES



REPTILE PROFILE

Name: Red-eared Slider

Type: Aquatic Turtle

Activity: Diurnal

Habitat: Rivers and Lakes

Geographic Range:

North America

Daytime Temperature:

70° - 85° F

Basking Temperature:

85° - 90° F

Nighttime Temperature:

65° - 70° F

Quick Facts: Many aquatic turtles, like the matamata (*Chelus fimbriatus*), use the “gape and suck” method to eat. They wait for a fish to swim by, then suddenly open their mouths wide and expand their throats to suck it in.

Some turtles clean each other. One turtle will use its jaws to pull algae and loose pieces of shell off the other. Then they switch places.



TERRARIUM SETUP GUIDE



- 1. Place included plant and any other décor in the terrarium.**



- 2. Add freshwater.** First, treat tap water with included Zilla® Water Conditioner in a separate container that pours easily, like a bucket. Add 1 tsp. (5ml) of conditioner for every 5 gallons of tap water. Fill terrarium with 4 to 5 inches of treated, room-temperature water.



TERRARIUM SETUP GUIDE CONT'D



- 3. Assemble floating basking platform.** Slide one suction cup to the bottom center of the u-shaped bracket. Insert both upward ends of u-shaped bracket through floating basking platform holders. Slide remaining two suction cups onto top ends of brackets.



- 4. Install floating basking platform.** Attach bracket and platform to tank wall with suction cups. Position bracket so platform floats midway between the top and bottom of bracket.



**5. Hang filter on open-end panel (see filter instructions for details).
Install plastic end plate over top of filter in open-end glass panel.**



6. Place screen cover on turtle tank.



TERRARIUM SETUP GUIDE CONT'D



- 7. Install lamps in light fixtures. (Read important safety instructions before installation.)** Place light fixture with Day Blue lamp above basking platform on screen cover. Place light fixture with Tropical 25 Coil bulb next to dome with Day Blue lamp.

AQUATIC TURTLE BASIC CARE GUIDE

NUMBER OF AQUATIC TURTLES PER ENCLOSURE

Aquatic turtles require plenty of room for swimming, foraging for food and basking. An aquatic turtle measuring 4 inches in length should be kept in an enclosure with a footprint of at least 30 x 12 inches (a 20L/29-gallon tank). For each additional turtle, an additional 10 gallons should be added to the aquarium size. The enclosure should be longer than it is tall. Multiple

adult aquatic turtles should be housed in a larger enclosure, such as a tub or pool.

WATER AND FILTRATION

In a natural setting, aquatic turtles inhabit lakes and streams that have plenty of depth for swimming and diving. Aquatic turtles should have plenty of room to swim beneath the surface of the water to promote natural behavior. The water should be at least as deep as the turtle is long.

BASIC CARE GUIDE CONT'D

WATER AND FILTRATION CONT'D

All species of aquatic turtles require fresh, clean water to be active and stay healthy. There are two primary methods to keeping water clean: provide a power filter and change the water regularly.

Always use a filter that removes solid waste from the water and utilizes activated carbon to remove impurities.

Even with a filter, the water will still need to be changed frequently. It is best to make small water changes frequently. When changing the water while using a filter, it is recommended to change out 25% of the water by siphoning it out into buckets, then replacing it with conditioned tap water once per week.

BASKING, LIGHTING AND HEATING

Aquatic turtles require a dry area for basking where they can absorb heat and light. Basking areas can consist of a flat rock, log, driftwood or floating platform. It should be large enough to host all aquatic turtles in the tank.

After the basking area is set up, provide a direct source of heat and light. The distance between the light source and the basking area will determine the wattage of the heat bulb. The temperature around the surface of the basking area closest to the heat source should reach 85-90° F.

The water and ambient temperature of the terrarium should never drop below 65° F. If keeping aquatic turtles in a room or area that is cooler, install a submersible heater to maintain a water temperature range of 75-80° for most species.

In addition to a direct heat source for basking, aquatic turtles need a UVB light source. Use a fluorescent lamp that produces beneficial ultraviolet rays (UVB and UVA) for 10-12 hours per day. These natural UVB rays keep the turtles' shells healthy by processing calcium for bone growth, while keeping them active.

DIET AND FEEDING

Aquatic turtles can be fed a variety of foods ranging from live feeder fish and earthworms to live plant matter such as romaine lettuce. The best all-around diets for aquatic turtles are commercial foods that come in the form of pellets, nuggets or sticks. These processed diets contain all the nutrients and proteins that turtles require. Follow the instructions on the food container for proper feeding.

Aquatic turtles eat while in the water. Feed them by dropping the food into the water. Processed diets, such as pellets, nuggets and sticks, will float on the water's surface.

PLANTS AND DECORATIONS

Plants provide a place to hide for security and shade from the daylight UVB bulb.

Artificial plants are preferred, as the turtles

BASIC CARE GUIDE CONT'D

PLANTS AND DECORATIONS CONT'D

may destroy the live plants. Artificial plants that come out just above the surface of the water provide a good resting place for younger turtles. As the turtles mature, plants that come out well above the water's surface are recommended as they take up less room in the water, allowing the turtles plenty of space to swim. The addition of gravel, rocks or river stones to the enclosure also provide an aesthetically natural-looking habitat.

RECOMMENDED READING

Complete Herp Care: Aquatic Turtles
by David T. Kirkpatrick

If, at any time, you are unable to continue caring for your pet turtle, make sure to find it a good home. Never release it into the wild.

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

24/7 Digital Timer Power Center

Controls daytime and nighttime lighting.



See zilla-rules.com for more information on Power Centers and other quality Zilla products.

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