

# Is a tortoise\* the right pet for me?

*Owning an animal is a commitment for life. Owning a tortoise is a commitment ten times that of a regular pet. Tortoises, when kept properly, can live for 100+ years. There is a multitude of questions to ask yourself while you are thinking about adding a tortoise to your life. The information below is meant to get you thinking about the potential commitment of tortoise ownership.*

## Consider:

- **Indoor space**
  - At least a 4x6 foot tortoise table – are you willing to increase the size of the table according to growth of the tortoise? Are you willing to potentially dedicate a room to your tortoise?
- **Outdoor space**
  - As large as you can make it. All torts REQUIRE outside time – are you willing to have half your yard dedicated to a tortoise pen?
- **Diet**
  - Fresh, varied, raw diet – are you willing to commit to a correct diet that will take planning, preparation and execution? Processed foods are nutritionally insufficient.
- **Climate**
  - Does the climate you live in match the native climate of the tortoise you chose? If not, how will you accommodate creating micro climates both indoor and outdoor?
- **Financials**
  - Are you willing to spend the appropriate amount of money on QUALITY lights, fresh food and necessary items for the species chosen? \$500 a year is not uncommon.

## Longevity: will you commit to your tortoise through life events such as:

- College
- Marriage, starting a family, dissolving a family, unexpected events, financial insecurity
- Moving locally, across state, across country or internationally
- Hard times – will you give up the animal or uphold your commitment? Rescues, sanctuaries and zoos should not be considered a viable option due to scarce resources.
- Who will you will it to upon death? How will you provide for its continued care?

*If you think you want to continue considering a tortoise for the pet the next section outlines the first level of decision making: choosing a species.*

## What kind of tortoise will work for you?

- **Basking:** hot spot, cool area, large temperature differential
  - Simpler set-ups, usually simpler diets (species examples: Mediterraneans, Chaco, Spider, Star, Gopher, Radiated, Sulcata, Leopard, Russian)
- **Non-basking:** warm area, cooler area, small temperature differential
  - Advanced set-ups, usually requiring micro climates including humidity, diet is usually more complex (species examples: Redfoot, Yellowfoot, Elongated, Kinixys, Impressed, various box turtle species)



*Dedication to education, rescue and captive breeding*

*\*assumptions made for an adult tortoise. Young tortoises require different considerations.*