

The truth about Sulcatas

Sulcatas are a fantastic tortoise that evolved to tolerate hot, dry climates. In the 1980s they were imported for the pet trade and now are over-bred and surpassing Red-Eared Sliders in rescues. Every Sulcata that comes through the rescue is preceded by "I had no idea how destructive or big they got." Sulcatas reach 100+ pounds and can turn any yard into a field of craters. Inform yourself before you purchase a Sulcata to ensure you can provide for its needs.

Truth: Sulcatas dig holes, big holes, and never stop

- In their natural environment Sulcatas dig huge burrows
- Sulcatas are always working on their burrows, they are never done



A 5-pound Sulcata dug this hole in 60 minutes.

Truth: Sulcatas are destructive

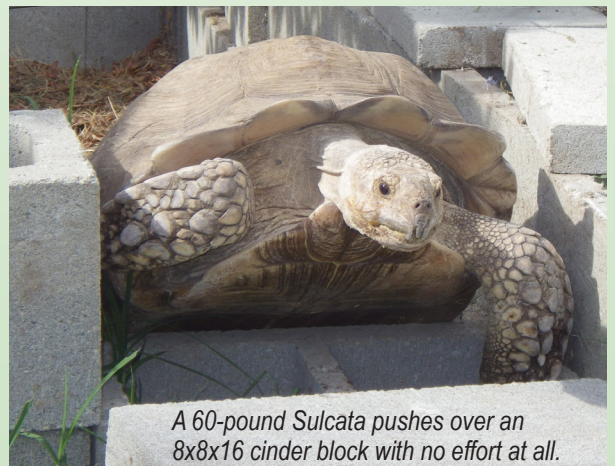
- Sulcatas are nomadic by nature and do not tolerate lack of space
- If a Sulcata wants to get out of a pen, it will
- Tenacious and powerful are understatements
- Underground barriers are a must as well as secure pens



A 14-pound Sulcata dug this hole on the right side of the wall and extended it underneath and past, causing eventual collapse of the wall.

Truth: Sulcatas are territorial and will defend it

- Sulcatas, both male and female, can be territorial
- Defending their area includes ramming (rising up on the front legs and thrusting the body resulting in the shell ramming the obstacle) and shuffling ('pushing' something out of the way by tucking the head inside the shell and pushing with legs and shell)
- Sulcatas are strong and powerful at all ages
- Obstacles such as flower pots, lawn mowers, reflections in glass are all potential "territorial invaders"
- Sulcatas are a bold, brave species; dogs and other animals can be targets



A 60-pound Sulcata pushes over an 8x8x16 cinder block with no effort at all.

Truth: The majority of owners feed Sulcatas incorrectly

- 70% grasses and hay (no alfalfa) is the correct Sulcata diet
- Yard greens: grasses, grape, clover, mulberry and fig leaves, dandelion, hibiscus leaves and flowers, optunia, thistles, chickweed, etc.

Exotic pets need exotic care



Information presented is intended as a general guide and in no way represents finality on the subject. Owners and prospective owners are encouraged to continue learning about the animals in their care.