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***Testudo marginata* (Schoepff, 1792) The Marginated Tortoise** - Lisa Weiss

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This care sheet is intended only to cover the general care of this species. Further research to best develop a maintenance plan for whichever species you are caring for is essential..

Testudo marginata (Schoepff, 1792) is a medium-sized tortoise species originally native to Greece. Adults can reach 12-14 inches, making them one of the largest of the Mediterranean species. Male tortoises are distinguished by their broadly flared rear marginal scutes, hence the name "marginata".

Males are also generally smaller, with a more elongate body shape than the females, and have longer, thicker tails. Typical wild habitat is arid, scrubby, rocky hillsides where the tortoises spend mornings and late afternoons browsing on weeds, shrubs and flowers while resting in the shade during the hottest afternoon hours. During the winter months, Marginated Tortoises hibernate underground, a characteristic which should be taken into account by prospective keepers (see "[Hibernation Guidelines](#)" on the WCT website for more information.)

Captive-bred *marginata* hatchlings are often available and can be kept under the same captive conditions required by *T. hermanni*. They will best thrive if kept outdoors during the summer months; a good-sized, predator-proof fenced enclosure planted with edible shrubs and weeds and furnished with a choice of shelters and a shallow water tray will suit them nicely. These tortoises are capable diggers, so perimeter fences should extend below ground to prevent escape. Indoors, a roomy tortoise table or other arrangement should include both basking and UVB fixtures or a combination UVB-heat bulb, a variety of landscape features for hiding and climbing, and a very shallow water dish. Temperatures should range from 90-95F (32-35 degrees C) in the basking area to high room temperatures on the cooler side



of the enclosure; this will allow the tortoise to regulate body temperature and metabolism as needed. Substrate can be a 50/50 mix of topsoil and play sand, and can include areas of dry orchard hay for feeding and burrowing. Especially in the case of young tortoises, a more humid area should be provided to prevent dehydration. This can be simply an area of damper soil, if the enclosure is large enough, or a humid hide-box or cave.

Diet should include the largest possible range of weeds, leaves and flowers, and can include dandelion, plantain, mallow, chicory, hibiscus, mulberry, grasses, sow thistle, clover, vetch, romaine, endive, escarole, opuntia, and occasional summer/winter squash or pumpkin and tomato. Dog and cat foods are not recommended for these tortoises. Fruits (melon, strawberries, apple, etc.) should only be offered as a very occasional treat. Foods should be sprinkled with Herptivite weekly and calcium powder several times per week, especially for juvenile or breeding animals. Use calcium supplemented with vitamin D3 for indoor tortoises, and without vitamin D3 for those living outdoors. Water should be made available for drinking and soaking.

Marginata are generally easy-going, beautiful and friendly tortoises with few health problems once established in good housing and environmental conditions.

It should be noted that turtle and tortoise care research is ongoing. As new information becomes available we share this on the World Chelonian Trust web site at www.chelonia.org. Serious keepers find it to be a benefit to have the support of others who keep these species. Care is discussed in our free online email community, which may be joined from the web address above. Please contact us about the many benefits of becoming a member of the World Chelonian Trust.

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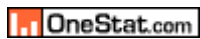
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