



Care and information sheet for your

## Asian Box Turtle

Common Name:	Asian Box Turtle
Scientific Name:	<i>Cuora amboinensis</i>
Adult Size:	6 to 8 inches long.
Lifespan:	30-40+ with proper care.
Male/Female Differences:	Males are usually smaller than females, have a slightly concave plastron (bottom of the shell), and their tail is longer and wider.
Compatibility:	Box turtles are solitary creatures that do not need companions to live a full life. However, turtles of the same species can be kept together, given there is enough space and food. Young turtles should also have adequate interaction in order for it to become accustomed to the owner and not develop behavioral issues when it is mature.
Origin:	Southeast Asia
Climate:	Tropical and very humid
Day Cycle:	Diurnal
Temperature:	The proper temperature allows the turtle to regulate body temperature. As such the temperature should be between 75-85°F, while their basking area should be between 85-95°F. A shaded area/hiding spot should also be provided where the temperature is cooler.
Lighting:	The lighting should provide three things – UVB, UVA, and heat. UVB rays help the turtle by providing D3, a vitamin that allows for the metabolization and absorption of calcium. Heat and UVA rays help regulate the turtle's feeding, activity, and mating. Lighting should be on for 10-12 hours a day with an emphasis on a consistent day/night cycle.
Humidity:	High (75-90%); lightly mist the tank every morning to simulate rain.
Habitat/Territory:	Asian box turtles inhabit rice paddies, open woodlands, and marshy meadows, near streams and ponds.

Substrate/Bedding:	A sand substrate appropriate for reptiles, dry mulch, or bark chips are good choices. Take into consideration that box turtles like to burrow and submerge themselves beneath moist soil. Avoid anything that could cause distress if ingested. Cage carpet or newspaper are safe choices if they are changed frequently.
Hiding Place/Den:	Non-toxic hiding places will provide a spot where the turtle can retreat to if they feel threatened or uncomfortable. This is especially important for younger turtles that may not always want attention.
Cage Type:	In the wild, box turtles occupy relatively large area and providing an enclosure that offers plenty of space is essential for their long-term health. One turtle can be kept comfortably in 36" x 18" aquarium. Asian box turtles are semi-aquatic and their habitat should contain a large, but shallow area where they can swim and soak themselves. When the weather is agreeable, the turtle should be taken outside, under supervision, and allowed to roam in a closed off area for several hours. The setup should duplicate their indoor habitat; shallow swimming area, moist substrate to bury themselves in, a basking spot, and a shaded area. Do make sure that dogs, cats, raccoons, crows, and other predatory animals cannot access the area.
Diet:	Box turtles are omnivores and as such their diet should incorporate equal amounts of meat and plant material. Wild box turtles feed on snails, earthworms, beetles, fish, mushrooms, roots, berries, flowers; their captive diet should match it closely. Juveniles require a higher protein (70-30%) to vegetable matter ratio, and for this reason they should be a more carnivorous diet until they are five years old. Mature turtles should have a 40-60% ratio of protein and vegetable matter. Healthy vegetables and plants include mustard greens, collard greens, kale, green beans, peas, carrots, dandelion flowers, and hibiscus flowers. Fruits like mango, papaya, apple, and melon can be given, but sparingly as an occasional treat. There are good commercial turtle pellets/foods that can be fed as the staple, but the emphasis should still be on a rotation of fresh foods.
Supplements:	Calcium and phosphorus supplements are recommended since turtles often suffer from shell and bone inadequacies and the phosphorus will help to control their metabolism. Since these supplements are usually in powder form, simply sprinkle over their food. Supplement a multivitamin once or twice a week.
Diet Precautions:	Excess amount of protein in young turtles cause rapid, unhealthy growth that could lead to permanent shell deformity. Avoid a uniform diet. Inadequate amounts of calcium and phosphorus are also issues with feeding the same foods.
Feeding:	Small amounts of vegetables and plants should be offered every day while the protein part of their diet - be it pellets, frozen fish, or worms – should be given every other day. Be careful not to overfeed.

Water Source:	Provide a constant supply of clean, fresh, and chlorine-free water. Change their water pan twice a day since box turtles tend to relieve themselves inside the water. Asian box turtles are capable swimmers and should be allowed to exercise. Take them outside to a pond, fill up a kiddie pool or bathtub a couple times a week and drop them in. Keep a close eye on the turtle during this time.
Grooming:	The appropriate humidity will help maintain healthy skin and shell.
Oral and Foot Care:	The turtle's nails may need to be clipped every couple of months depending on the level of their activity. Use cat safe clippers.
Proper Handling:	Pick them up with both hands and make sure to support their body. Be careful to keep your fingers away from its face as it may mistake them for worms. Always wash your hands thoroughly after handling a turtle with antibacterial soap.
Habitat Maintenance:	Healthy turtles will relieve themselves a lot, so cleaning their habitat is very important. Turtles tend to defecate right after they eat, so it is advised to feed them in a small container filled with water. The habitat should be spot cleaned every day and thoroughly cleaned out, disinfected, and replaced once a week.
Health Concerns:	Box turtles are prone to metabolic bone disease/soft shell (MBD), dystocia (egg binding), shell rot, respiratory infections, fungal infections, ear infections, ticks/mites and obesity. MBD is a serious, but preventable condition brought on about by lack of calcium or vitamin D3. Appropriate UVB lighting and a differentiated diet will help counteract this disease. Dystocia affects female turtles when eggs are abnormally held within the body. Constructing a nesting area (consisting of moist soil, leaves, and sand) and meeting their calcium needs should prevent this anomaly. Shell rot develops when an injury to the shell becomes infected because of the turtle spending too much time within the water. Symptoms are discoloration, exposed tissue, and softening of the shell. Keeping the aquarium clean, antibiotics, and a lot of rest will help remedy this ailment. Improper temperatures cause respiratory infections, which may become fatal. Irregular swimming, breathing difficulties, and lethargy are all symptoms of infection. Consult your veterinarian immediately. Ear infections are caused by the poor water quality and the symptoms are erratic swimming and a swollen head. Consult your veterinarian immediately as he/she will need to prescribe antibiotics. Poor water quality and insufficient UVB lighting cause fungal infections. Cleaning the water, soaking the turtle in saltwater, and using sulfa blocks should help clear up the fungus. Ticks and mites are caused by an unclean environment or can be brought in by outside food. Visible black parasites can be seen on the turtle's skin. Clean and disinfect the habitat, apply anti-mite medication, and use newspaper as the substrate until the illness clears up. The causes for obesity are obvious, not enough exercise and bad nutrition. Feed less, focusing more on vegetables and make sure the turtle gets a

decent amount of activity, be it by buying a bigger enclosure or letting them play outside under close supervision.