



# Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program

## Aquatic Turtle Habitat Fall Maintenance Tips

Below are the supplies and tools needed to complete each maintenance task along with an estimated cost, an estimated amount of time needed to accomplish each task, and the frequency for each task.

Task Description	Supplies/Tools Needed	Estimated Cost	Est. Time Needed	Frequency of Task
<b>WEEKLY FALL MAINTENANCE TIPS</b>				
Feed each turtle a balanced diet of fruit, vegetables and protein on its individual "feeding rock" so that they do not compete for food.	See Food List on AWF website	Food Cost if not donated	5-10 minutes	3-4 times per week
Remove uneaten food from the "feeding rocks" and clean the rocks with dish soap and water. *Do NOT use any cleaning chemicals in the habitat.	Gloves, dish washing liquid, water, brush	\$5-10 per year	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Check the perimeter of the habitat (including the boards or pavers) for possible new escape routes.	Boards/ pavers (if needed)	\$5-10 per year	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Check your turtle's health. Contact a vet familiar with reptiles if you note changes in eating or behavior for more than 2 weeks, changes in color, softening or flaking of the shell, or discharge from the nose or mouth.	n/a	Cost of vet visit when needed	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Check the pond pump and filter. Clean them out and check them for needed maintenance.	n/a	n/a	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Check on the fish in the pond. If they have been eaten or died, add 5 or 6 more mosquito fish or goldfish to provide hunting opportunities for your turtles and so they will eat any mosquito eggs and larvae.	Mosquito fish or goldfish	\$0-5 for a few fish	5-10 minutes	Once every two weeks
Water the plants in the habitat to a depth of 2 inches if it has not rained that week.	hose	n/a	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Check the habitat for fire ants. If found, move the turtles to a terrarium. Use a broom to create holes in the fire ant mound, and put Diatomaceous Earth (a natural, non-toxic powder) into the holes. Do NOT use chemicals. It may take several applications. Do NOT return the turtles to the habitat until all fire ants are gone.	Diatomaceous Earth	\$20	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Other:				
<b>AUGUST</b>				
Create/Update your turtle habitat map including the list of plants in the learning station.	Use example Learning Station Map on AWF website		1-2 hours	Once in the Fall
Other:				



Task Description	Supplies/Tools Needed	Estimated Cost	Est. Time Needed	Frequency of Task
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>				
Check for diseased/damaged plants. Remove them or contact your Master Gardeners or County Extension Office for additional advice.	n/a	n/a	30-45 minutes	Once in the Fall
Keep an eye out for possible turtle eggs or baby box turtles. <b>DO NOT TOUCH THE TURTLE EGGS!</b> Contact AWF if eggs or babies are found.	n/a	n/a	5-10 minutes	In Sept & Oct.
Other:				
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
Plant new perennials in the habitat to replace any plants lost through the summer. Visit AWF's website to review Learning Station plant suggestions.	spades &/or shovels to plant new plants	\$5-10 per plant	30-45 minutes	Once in the Fall
Clean the pond by removing floating leaves and other debris. Replace dirty water with fresh clean water when needed.	Gloves & hose	n/a	15-20 minutes	Once in the Fall
Monitor your turtles' activity and food consumption. As the weather starts to cool and the time for hibernation approaches, they will become less active and eat less.	n/a	n/a	5-10 minutes	Once or Twice per week
Add topsoil and mulch around the base of the plants to help protect them for the winter.	bags of soil & mulch	\$5-10 per bag	5-10 minutes	Once in the Fall
Other:				
<b>NOVEMBER</b>				
Monitor your turtles' activity and food consumption. Once the turtles stop eating and disappear by burrowing in the detritus at the bottom of the pond, then they will begin hibernation- <b>DO NOT DISTURB THEM!</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	Hibernation will begin by end of Nov.
Other:				
<b>DECEMBER</b>				
Hibernation - <b>DO NOT DISTURB THE HABITAT</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	Until Late March or Mid-April
Brainstorm ideas for possible additions or modification to the habitat if needed.	Turtle Habitat Map	n/a	30-45 minutes	Once in the Fall
Other:				

