



Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program

Aquatic Turtle Habitat Spring Maintenance Tips

Below are the supplies/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 each task should be done.

Task Description	Supplies/Tools Needed	Estimated Cost	Est. Time Needed	Frequency of Task
WEEKLY SPRING MAINTENANCE TIPS (once the turtles emerge from hibernation)				
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:				



<i>Task Description Continued...</i>	Supplies/Tools Needed	Estimated Cost	Est. Time Needed	Frequency of Task
JANUARY				
Hibernation - DO NOT DISTURB THE HABITAT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Explore grants to improve the habitat or to add educational signage, and designate OC Committee Member(s) to apply for grants (if needed).	AWF Grant Info on the Website	n/a	3-4 hours	Once per year
Other:				
FEBRUARY				
Hibernation - DO NOT DISTURB THE HABITAT	n/a	n/a	n/a	Until Late March or Mid-April
Other:				
MARCH				
As the weather warms up outside, watch for the turtles to come out of hibernation. They may appear and then go back into hibernation for a few weeks if the temperatures fluctuate.	n/a	n/a	n/a	Twice per week
Clean the pond by removing floating leaves and other debris, and then drain/pump out dirty water and replace with fresh clean water.	gloves	n/a	15-30 minutes	Once in the Spring
Other:				
APRIL				
Divide and remove any plants that have become invasive in the pond and habitat. Do NOT cut the pond liner.	pots, soil, and small spade	n/a	1-2 hours	Once in the Spring
Other:				
MAY				
Create a Summer Feeding & Care Schedule for the turtles to allow students/families, student clubs or faculty members to help care for the turtles in the summer. You can use the Weekly Checklist above for the summer volunteers.	Word document or Spreadsheet	n/a	1 hour to create schedule & contact volunteers	Once per year
Other:				

