

## Captive Desert Tortoise Diet

### *Favored native plants (all of plant consumed unless otherwise noted)*

Hoary abutilon ( <i>Abutilon</i> spp.)	Evening primrose* ( <i>Oenothera</i> spp.)
Arizona cottontop grass ( <i>Digitaria</i> spp.)	Fern acacia (flowers) ( <i>Acacia angustissima</i> )
Bamboo muhly grass ( <i>Muhlenbergia dumosa</i> )	Globe mallows* ( <i>Sphaeralcea</i> spp.)
Blue grama grass ( <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> )	Morning glory (Convolvulaceae)
Buckwheats ( <i>Eriogonum</i> spp.)	Plantain* ( <i>Plantago</i> spp.)
Cassia ( <i>Senna</i> spp.)	Prickly pear (fruit and new pads) ( <i>Opuntia</i> )
Curly mesquite grass ( <i>Hilaria belangeri</i> )	Hibiscus (flowers and leaves) ( <i>Hibiscus denudatus</i> and <i>H. coulteri</i> )
Deer grass ( <i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i> )	Spurges* ( <i>Euphorbia</i> spp.)
Desert four-o'clock ( <i>Mirabelis spectabilis</i> )	Trailing four-o'clock ( <i>Allionia incarnata</i> )
Desert honeysuckle ( <i>Anisacanthus thurberi</i> )	Vine mesquite grass ( <i>Panicum obtusum</i> )
Desert senna ( <i>Cassia covesii</i> )	
Desert willow (flowers) ( <i>Chilopsis linearis</i> )	

### *Acceptable produce*

Barley	Cilantro	Parsley
Bean sprouts (mung)	Collard greens	String beans
Beet greens	Endive	Snow peas
Bok choy	Kale	Spinach
Carrot greens	Mustard greens	Turnip greens

### *Other healthy foods*

Alfalfa (fresh or hay)	Clover*	Pumpkin leaves*
Bermuda grass (fresh or hay)	Dandelion greens	Rose petals*
Bluegrass lawn	Grape leaves and shoots	Watercress
Cantaloupe leaves	Mulberry leaves*	Zucchini/squash leaves

\* = good for young desert tortoises

### *Avoid the following*

All types of lettuce	Cucumber	Frozen vegetables
Avocado	Any protein-rich foods	Chinaberry berries
All fruit	Canned vegetables	Plants in the <i>Nicotiana</i>
Cabbage	Starchy vegetables	(tobacco) genus
Celery	(including corn)	Mushrooms

## **Important Diet Information**

**Give your tortoise native plants.** Commercial produce is, in general, less nutritious than native plants for tortoises due to higher water and lower fiber content.

**Feed your tortoise a variety of fresh food.** In the wild, tortoises eat many different plants. Provide a variety of fresh foods to meet your tortoise's nutritional needs.

**No sodium.** Do not feed tortoises sodium-rich foods including canned, dairy products, breads, and celery.

**No cat or dog food.** They may cause digestive problems because the fiber content is too low for tortoises. The excess protein can accelerate growth, causing shell deformities and possible death.

**Avoid fruit, starchy vegetables and corn.** Desert tortoises have beneficial bacteria in their intestines. Too much sugar and starch disrupts digestion by changing the type of bacteria that live in the tortoises' hindgut.