



GARDENING WITH CALIFORNIA DESERT TORTOISES (*Gopherus agassizi*)

Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

10459 Tuxford Street, Sun Valley, CA 91352 | 818 768-1802 | theodorepayne.org

TPF's **Desert Tortoise Mixture** includes seeds for seven different native plant species, including many of those below.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS

(A) = Annual wildflower: sow in fall

Atriplex polycarpa (cattle spinach)
Baileya multiradiata (desert marigold)
Bouteloua curtipendula (side oats grama)
Castilleja exserta (**owl's clover**) (A)
Chilopsis linearis flowers (desert willow)
Eriogonum fasciculatum (CA buckwheat)
Lasthenia californica (goldfields) (A)
Layia platyglossa (tidy tips) (A)
Layia glandulosa (white tidy tips) (A)
Malacothrix glabrata (desert dandelion) (A)
Opuntia basilaris (beavertail cactus)
Phacelia distans (distant phacelia) (A)
Phacelia tanacetifolia (lacy phacelia) (A)
Salvia columbariae (chia) (A)
Sphaeralcea ambigua (apricot mallow)
Stipa hymenoides (Indian rice grass)
Stipa speciosa (desert needlegrass)
Vitis girdiana (California desert grape)
Xylorhiza tortifolia (Mojave aster)

NON-NATIVE PLANTS

Mulberry leaves
Rose petals
Geraniums
Hibiscus flowers
Dandelion leaves and flowers*
Sow thistle*
Filaree*
Bermuda grass*
St. Augustine grass*
Mediterranean grass*
Stinging nettle*
Common mallow/cheeseweed*
Chickweed*

*These plants are invasive weeds in California. Allow tortoises to forage on pre-existing material, but do not intentionally plant these. If desperate for these plants, volunteer with a local non-profit (TPF, CNPS, etc.) for the opportunity to help remove these plants from wild area

TIPS

- Dandelion greens, as well as pre-cleaned cactus pads (nopales) and fruit (tunas) are available at certain grocery stores, such as Super King, Vallarta and Sunland Produce.
- **Supplement your tortoise's diet with calcium** once or twice a week in the form of cuttlebone (with hard backing removed) or boiled, ground eggshell.
- Mimic a rainstorm every couple of weeks, allowing puddles to form near your tortoise.
- Leave uneaten food out to dry. Tortoises may choose to eat the dry matter later.
- Protect/cage newly planted forage plants for one year, or until they are established.

RESOURCES: California Turtle and Tortoise Club, tortoise.org; **Don's Desert Tortoises**, donsdeserttortoises.com; Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, tortoise-tracks.org