***Boxie Business:***

Box turtles are land dwelling turtles that thrive in damp forest type conditions. They naturally come from North America and Mexico. They make great pets for beginners and experienced reptile keepers. This sheet is to offer general care advice for basic box turtle husbandry. Each species is different so further research should be done about the specific species you own.

***Habitat:*** Box turtles are very active and require large enclosures. Most do best in outdoor habitats. If they must be kept indoors an open habitat such as a tub or tortoise table is ideal. The larger the habitat the better, but they must have an enclosure that is at least 4 feet long. The habitat must be big enough to provide a warm area for the turtle to heat up and a cool area for the turtle to cool down.

***Substrate:*** Turtles do best with a loose moisture holding substrate such as coconut fiber. The substrate should be deep enough for the turtle to bury itself in. It should be moist but not dripping wet. You can use \*bioactive soil to help maintain a clean and healthy substrate.

***Furnishings:*** Turtles need stimulation and privacy so it is important to offer a variety of plants and caves for them in their habitat. Small branches and rocks for climbing will be appreciated too. Bricks and tile can offer different surfaces to explore, while also helping the turtle to keep its nails and beak filed.

***Food:*** Turtles are omnivores which means you must feed them plants and meat. They enjoy a wide range of foods such as dark leafy greens (collard greens, mustard greens, dandelion greens, kale, mulberry leaves), fresh fruits (melons, berries, bananas) and vegetables (squash, green beans, asparagus), various insects (super worms, meal worms, snails, slugs, cockroaches, soldier fly larvae), and other animal proteins (small pieces of chicken, beef, and fish). Turtles should be offered food every day. The more variety of foods offered, the healthier the turtle will be. A good feeding guide is to offer a pile of fresh greens and veggies the size of the turtles shell, topped with a few insects, every day.

***Water:*** Turtles need lots of clean fresh water. They must be provided with a large dish of water that they can climb into and move around in. The water should be kept on the cooler side of the habitat. It needs to be cleaned daily.

***Supplements:*** Calcium should be added to the food at least twice a week. This can be done by sprinkling calcium powder on the food, or offering cuttle bone with the food. These supplements can be purchased on line or at a pet store.

***Lighting:*** In the wild turtles spend at least 12 hours a day in and out of the sun, so in captivity you must provide the same. Outdoor habitats with natural sunlight are the best, but if indoor habitats must be used, you must provide artificial sunlight. Special UVB producing bulbs must be placed over the habitat at least 12 hours a day. These bulbs can be purchased at a pet store or online. The light will last a long time, but the UV strength diminishes so it is important to look up the replacement time for the type of bulb you end up using and put the date on the tank so you do not forget to get a new one when its time.

***Heat:*** Turtles need to be able to control their temperature in their environment. For this reason large habitats must be provided offering a warm side and a cooler side. Indoor habitats can have heat lamps or ceramic heat emitters (produce heat without light) on top of one end of the habitat. Outdoor habitats should provide plenty of open space with areas exposed to natural sunlight so the turtle can warm up as needed. Equally important are the shaded areas for the turtle to get away from the heat or sun.

***Cohabitating:*** Females can be kept together as long as they have enough room. Males will fight injuring and possibly killing each other. Males kept with females will breed constantly compromising the female’s health and well-being.

If you have any questions or concerns not addressed here, feel free to contact Creepy Critters Rescue at anytime.