



Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program

Box Turtle Habitat Fall Maintenance Checklist

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 FALL MAINTENANCE TIPS				
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
If the pond has a pump and/or filter, clean them out and check them for needed maintenance. If it does NOT have a pump/filter, add fresh clean water to the pond with a hose. Remove dirty water when needed.	hose	n/a	5-10 minutes	Once per week
Check on the fish in the pond. If they have been eaten or died, add 2 or 3 mosquito fish or goldfish to eat the mosquito eggs and larvae.	Mosquito fish or goldfish	\$0-5 for a few fish	5-10 minutes	Once per week
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:				
AUGUST				
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
SEPTEMBER				
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. DO NOT TOUCH THE TURTLE EGGS! Contact AWF if eggs or babies are found.	n/a	n/a	5-10 minutes	In Sept & Oct.
Other:				
OCTOBER				
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	\$5-10 per plant	30-45 minutes	Once in the Fall
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
Add 2 or 3 bags of leaf litter (dried leaves) to make burrowing easier.	leaves	Get donated	30-45 minutes	Once in the Fall
Clean the pond by removing floating leaves and other debris.	gloves	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 be less active and eat less.	n/a	n/a	5-10 minutes	Once or Twice per week
Other:				
NOVEMBER				
Monitor your turtles' activity and food consumption. Once the turtles stop eating and disappear by burrowing in the ground, then they will begin hibernation- DO NOT DISTURB THEM!	n/a	n/a	n/a	Hibernation will begin by end of Nov.
Other:				
DECEMBER				
Hibernation - DO NOT DISTURB THE HABITAT	n/a	n/a	n/a	Until Late March or Mid-April
Brainstorm ideas for possible additions or modification to the habitat.	Turtle Habitat Map	n/a	30-45 minutes	Once in the Fall
Other:				

