

The Herp Gazette

HOUSE OF REPTILES

11507 S.W. Pacific Highway
Tigard, Oregon

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H of R featured in Reptiles Magazine and on TV

Check it out...in the January 2009 issue of Reptiles Magazine, **House of Reptiles** is featured in the Reptile Retailer Spotlight section. The full-page story about our store, including a couple photos, is listed on page 18.

This is actually something we've been trying to accomplish for a couple years. Reptiles Magazine is the only magazine published in the U.S. that is devoted solely to herpetoculture. After several attempts to get the magazine staff interested in our store, it was with the help of store friend Joel Ebarb that

we finally got it done. Once they became informed about the store and what we are all about, the staff at Reptiles Magazine were excited to feature our story. It turned out very well, other than leaving out Marshall's name, and we are quite proud to add the magazine layout to our list of accomplishments.

In the past couple of months, we've also been featured on several TV news stations and one community newspaper following the alligator

rescue that we participated in. Most recently, we were also featured in a segment of the Portland Now cable TV show. That camera crew came out to the store to interview and film us with a lot of different animals. It was a fun morning. That segment can be viewed at the following link: http://www.portlands32.com/pages/portland_now

Staff Updates:

Since our last newsletter, the staff at **House of Reptiles** continue to be busy...

Marshall turned 18 in December and is doing well in his last year of high school. He continues to collect more invertebrates (much to his Mom's dismay) and his latest acquisition was an Indian violet tarantula. He's also ventured into the world of dating and now has a girlfriend named Whitney.

Isaac has slowed down on his fishing with the weather getting cold. Cooking continues to be one of his passions and pastimes, and we all look forward to the leftovers he occasionally

brings to work. He even got a commercial meat slicer for Christmas!

With the help of some friends of his parents, Paul will be moving soon into his very own house in Keizer. Aside from that, he continues to rock out with his band, The Happy Place, and hang out with girlfriend, Katie.

Kim continues to help us out one morning a week and with parties and shows. Keeping up with karate and her two girls keeps her quite active.

Tim took Thanksgiving and Christmas off to eat

out and see a movie with wife, Shawn. This is snake breeding season, so things are active on that front at home. Recently diagnosed with diabetes, Tim's also trying to figure out how to manage that.

Current and former volunteers include Robbie Brink, Kayley Broyles, Alison Burros, Ben Chase, Haylee Cummings, Ricky Dunitz, Seth Ellison, Tawnya Fulton, Konner Krikava, Kelsey Lissman, Nick Lund, Will Lund, Hadley Rentz, Jessica Sampson, Luke Smukalla and Kenton.

Quarterly Care Sheet: Box Turtle

SPECIES: BOX TURTLE (*Terrapene sp.*)



"If maintained in a proper manner, box turtles may live to be over 100 years old."

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Of the six to eight species of box turtles native to North America, four are commonly found in the pet trade: the Eastern Box Turtle, the Three-toed Box Turtle, the Gulf Coast Box Turtle, and the Ornate Box Turtle. These turtles are widespread throughout the eastern, central and southwestern United States and on into the northern parts of Mexico. Box turtles are full-grown when their top shell (carapace) reaches anywhere from six inches (Ornate, Three-toed) to eight inches (Eastern, Gulf Coast). Males have thicker and generally longer tails than females, and are usually larger overall and more colorful than females. Male box turtles also tend to have a concave plastron (bottom shell). Depending upon their environment and diet, box turtles will reach full size within four to six years. If maintained in a proper manner, box turtles may live to be over 100 years old.

CAPTIVE CARE: Indoor enclosures should be at least 48 inches by 24 inches for an adult box turtle - larger is even better! Create the land area using 2 to 3 inches of a premium potting soil (lacking perlite and vermiculite) or a commercially made soil and moss mix (this is what we use at the store). You may also mix the soil with finely shredded orchid or fir bark. Do NOT use coarse substrates such as sand, gravel or rock that can scratch the turtle's shell, opening the way to bacterial infections. Box turtles enjoy having access to a shelter or hide box filled with additional substrate material, or drifts of fresh alfalfa hay in which to burrow. A water area should be provided by placing a dish or pan in the enclosure that is large enough for the turtle to lay in and shallow enough for it to easily climb in and out of. The temperatures need to be 85 to 90F on the warm end and 70 to 75F (room temperature) on the cool end. This can be accomplished using some type of overhead heat source. Overhead heat sources include ceramic heaters, and red or blue bulbs. The heat source should be left on 24 hours per day. (White light cannot be left on all day.) Additionally, box turtles require UV-B lighting, which helps the turtles metabolize vitamin D3. These special bulbs, which emit ultraviolet-B (UV-B) light, come in incandescent and fluorescent options and they should be left on for 12 to 14 hours per day. (NOTE: UV-B bulbs should be replaced every six to 12 months.) Mercury vapor bulbs, our first choice for box turtles, can be used – their advantage is in providing BOTH heat and UV-B. Since turtles are motivated by sight and smell, they should be offered a varied, colorful diet. Young turtles should be fed daily and they eat more animal matter than do adults. Adults can be fed every other day and animal matter should be no more than about 10% of their diet. Appropriate plant matter for box turtles includes grated/shredded carrots, orange squash, and green beans, as well as mustard, dandelion and collard greens. Fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, blackberries, cherries, plums and cantaloupe (with the rind) will be appreciated. For treats, try feeding your box turtle the flowers of hibiscus, nasturtiums, geraniums, and rose petals. Meat/live foods (which provide protein) can include low-fat canned dog food (especially chicken), finely chopped cooked chicken, king mealworms, earthworms (a favorite), pinky mice, slugs, snails and crickets. If you acquire earthworms, slugs or snails from your garden area make sure that they are pesticide and fertilizer free. (One way to do this is to feed them dark, leafy green vegetables for four days - any that have been exposed to poisons will die in that time.) Dust all foods with a high quality vitamin/mineral supplement as directed by the manufacturer (we use and recommend Miner-All).

ADDITIONAL NOTES: Due to health problems associated with children putting small turtles into their mouths, it is illegal for anyone to sell turtles smaller than 4 inches in length (carapace length).

Native Herp Spotlight: Common Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis ssp.*)

Although they are certainly abundant in Oregon, the Common Garter Snake (not “gardener” snake) is the most widespread reptile in North America. There are also wide variations in the appearances of the 11 or 12 currently recognized subspecies, three of which occur in Oregon or Washington – the Red-Spotted Garter Snake, the Valley Garter Snake and the Puget Sound Garter Snake.

Adults average 18 to 36 inches long but individuals up to 52 inches have been recorded. Although they occur with much variation, most individuals display a very bright, wide, lightly colored stripe that extends the entire length of the dorsal ridge. Various

colored lateral stripes and/or blotches may also be present. The head is usually black or darkly colored on top, although some populations have a red head (especially the Red-Spotted Garter).

Common Garter Snakes are usually found near aquatic environments or moist habitats where they hunt their favorite prey – earthworms, fish, small amphibians and their larvae. Small mammals and birds are sometimes eaten, as are the toxic Western Toad and Rough Skinned Newt. Common Garter Snakes give birth to an average of three to 18 live babies each July or August, although there are records of litters with as many as 85 babies.

These snakes winter in

den sites that can contain hundreds of individuals.

Common Garter Snakes are not protected in Oregon and, consequently, it is not against the law to remove them from the wild. But the decision to do that with one of these animals, or any other native species for that matter, should be tempered by the thoughtful consideration of how ready you are to take care of it in a manner that will allow it to live a healthy and long life.

“Pet” Peeves: Cheaper Isn’t Always Less Expensive!

The issues of cost, pricing, quality of merchandise and quality of service are of concern to all of us, probably now more than ever. Although there are some particular kinds of products we will never be able to offer at the same price that the chain stores sell them for, many of our products are actually at or even below their prices. But beyond a cost-to-cost comparison, there are other things that should factor in to the issues surrounding cost.

For instance, if you purchase an animal from Store A because it was less money than at Store B, even though Store B takes superior care of

their animals, in the long run you may not have saved any money. If that animal eventually requires veterinary care because it was sick when you bought it, or wasn’t sick but had a lower functioning immune system because of how it was being cared for and then became sick – you won’t have saved any money after all.

If Store A sold you products, some of which were less expensive than Store B’s products, but sold you products that didn’t address your pets needs and the result was that your pet got sick, your less expensive initial purchase won’t end up being less expensive.

There are a few stores around, like **House of Reptiles**, that take great pride in the health of the animals they offer, the accuracy of the information they disseminate, and the quality of the products they sell. A thoughtful analysis of all the issues involved will lead to the understanding that these stores will ultimately help you spend your money more wisely and you’ll get more for the money you do spend. We ask you to support those stores, most of which are locally owned and operated. You’ll spend less money in the long run and help to keep your community afloat.

*“There are a few stores around, like **House of Reptiles**, that take great pride in the health of the animals they offer, the accuracy of the information they disseminate, and the quality of the products they sell.”*

International Herp News

A 52-year-old Ontario, Canada resident was recently fined \$10,000 for gathering endangered turtles for exotics meals.

In Beijing, China firefighters were called in to free a local woman whose hand had gotten stuck in her toilet while she was attempting to rescue her turtle. The woman had apparently

dropped the turtle in the toilet while she was removing the water from its bowl during cleaning. Both the woman and the turtle survived the ordeal.

In a survey conducted over the 10-year period from 1997 to 2007, scientists discovered over 1000 new species in the Greater Mekong River region. The area studied

encompassed the countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and southern China. Scientists discovered 519 plants, 279 fish, 88 frogs, 88 spiders, 46 lizards, 22 snakes, 15 mammals, 4 birds, 4 turtles, 2 salamanders, and one toad. Scientists believe there are many more yet to be discovered.

National/Pacific Northwest Herp News

For the first time since 1964, the public is being allowed to hunt alligators during a month-long season in South Carolina. Seven other states already offer a public hunt for alligators. These animals were nearly extinct in the 60's due to over-harvesting and have since made a near miraculous comeback. Let's hope that these

public hunts won't push the gators back to rarity.

This years annual Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists will be held in Portland, July 22nd through 29th, 2009. For any of you who have a scientific interest in these kinds of animals, this will be a rare opportunity to hear some nationally known speakers and rub

elbows with researchers who are conducting some fascinating research regarding these animals.

"This years annual Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists will be held in Portland, July 22nd through 29th, 2009."

House of Reptiles Store News

The alligator we rescued a few months ago is growing rapidly and may have to go to Florida even before the end of the next quarter. Don't worry though... we already have another smaller one to take its place.

Daisy's death created the opportunity to bring out Buttercup, our 10-foot long albino Burmese python. We've had her in the storage room for the past couple years and she is now on display in the big cage out front. The cage that Buttercup occupied is now the home of Duke, a six-foot long, normal Burmese python.

He was rescued in December of 2007 and has come to live with us.

Our venomous display animal for January will be a beautiful western diamondback rattlesnake. We know you'll want to come check him out!

We're waiting for our first New Caledonian Giant Gecko eggs to hatch in January. This has been a several year long project and it's exciting to see it possibly come to fruition.

In December, we made our annual donation of \$500 to the Doernbecher Children's Hospital and decided on our 2009 herp

donation recipient – it will be the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR) with headquarters in Kansas. We'll let you know in our next newsletter how much money we were able to donate to our 2008 herp donation recipient, the Amphibian Ark.

Continued "thanks" to customers Natasha Buel and Chris Karr for their generous veggie donations.

We hope you had a safe and joyful holiday season and we wish you, your family and your herps a healthy and happy new year.

"We're waiting for our first New Caledonian Giant Gecko eggs to hatch in January."

Customer & Pet Profile – Harry Lau

Our customer and pet profile for this quarter is Harry Lau, a Sherwood resident who shares his life and home with many invertebrates and a couple reptiles.

Harry was born and raised in Hong Kong. Both his parents were fond of animals, but his father was especially fond of and experienced with herps. Harry remembers being taught about herps as early as eight or nine years of age. Under the tutelage of his father, Harry was introduced to such species as red-eared sliders, “money” turtles, iguanas, rainbow boas, ball pythons, rat snakes, milk snakes, and the native Chinese cobra. For his 13th birthday, he bought himself his first pet reptile – an iguana. One thing led to another and he soon had three iguanas that he remembers taking good care of, despite the fact that there were no care sheets back then and little husbandry information available. In fact, that was part of why he needed to learn English – to read the information he could find about iguanas. He later added leopard geckos to his growing menagerie and was even able to breed them. At 15 he got his first tarantula and has been

crazy about invertebrates ever since. He moved to Oregon in 2001 and has watched his collection grow even more. Currently he keeps a rhinoceros iguana, a green iguana, a sulcata tortoise, two leopard geckos, three rescued frogs, one marine toad, one centipede, five adult millipedes, 13 scorpions, about 20 walking sticks, over 225 true spiders, and 285 tarantulas representing at least 50 different species. Now THAT’S a house full of critters.

Harry’s goals are to continue to learn more about his animals, to teach people about them, and he still has a few more that are on his wish list.

If you or your child would like to be featured in our “Customer & Pet Profile” in future editions of *The Herp Gazette*, bring or send in a photo of that person with their pet(s), as well as a little biographical information about them. If you’d prefer, you can let one of the **House of Reptiles** staff interview you and we’ll put the bio together for you and then let you review it before it goes to print.



Harry, hamming it up with his sulcata tortoise, “Bowser” (above) and his green iguana, “Yoshi” (below)



Know Your Herp Laws

We are often asked about the laws in our area that affect reptile and amphibian ownership.

There are different federal, state, county and city laws that may apply. Federal laws prohibit keeping any animals that are protected by the Endangered Species Act. Those laws and related topics can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>.

It is also a violation of federal law to sell any turtle that is less than four inches long, unless it is sold for scientific or educational purposes only.

The list of animals that are prohibited, non-controlled, controlled, and protected at the state level in Oregon can be found at: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/OARs/56.pdf>.

Each county and city can also have its own regulations and statutes. For instance, Multnomah County’s rules are in their “Dangerous or Exotic Animal” section and those rules prohibit any venomous or poisonous reptile, as well as any reptile of the order Crocodylia (crocodiles, alligators and caimans), or any snake of the family Pythonidae or Boinae

capable of obtaining eight feet or more in length.

Those rules can be found at: <http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/dbcs/pets/guide.shtml>.

Portland’s rules mirror Multnomah County’s rules and Beaverton’s rules prohibit the keeping of crocodilians.



House of Reptiles

Purpose Statement:

To offer healthy animals, quality products, accurate information and on-going customer support in a friendly, clean environment.

We strive to be the Best in the Northwest!

ADDRESS:

11507 S.W. Pacific Highway
Tigard, OR 97223

PHONE:

(503) 722-1992

STORE HOURS:

Monday thru Friday:
10am to 7pm
Saturday:
10am to 6pm
Sunday:
Noon to 5pm

E-MAIL:

info@house-of-reptiles.com

The Herp Gazette is published on a quarterly basis, each January, April, July, and October.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.house-of-reptiles.com

New Product Spotlight: Pet Tech Magnaturals

Pet Tech Products has recently come out with a line of terrarium furnishings that are held in place by magnets. They not only look nice but they install in seconds, are made from 100% non-toxic materials, and work on most terrariums up to ¼ inch thick. The line of furnishings includes several sizes each of "rock" ledges, "mushroom"

ledges, feed and water ledges, plant holders, hanging vines, vine clusters, vine bridges, and a few others. All are about as close to realistic as we've seen. If you've been looking for something to spruce up your herps cage that is unique and attractive, give these a peek. We think you'll like them as much as we do.



Isaac's Herp Challenge for the Quarter

Last quarter I asked if you could tell me what state lists the Pacific Tree Frog as its official state amphibian. Washington State would have been the correct answer. Hats off to the school children that made that possible.

This month we are talking about Common Garter Snakes. These are some of my all time favorite

About Our Organization...

House of Reptiles is owned and operated by Tim Criswell, who has over 20 years of experience in keeping and breeding reptiles and

snakes that I've kept. Common Garter Snakes have many names, and it all depends on where you are in North America and what subspecies can be found there. Some in the Northwest even call them Racers, which are a different type of snake all together.

Garter snakes can be found all over North

amphibians. Assisting Tim are his wife, Shawn, employees Marshall Brooks, Isaac Miller, Paul Hoffman, and Kim Hamblin, and a few

America, and are believed to have even become an invasive species in Sweden! In the United States, the Common Garter Snake can be found in 48 states. Hawaii is one state where you cannot find a Common Garter in the wild. Do you know the other state where you will not find a Garter Snake?

volunteers who are mentioned above in the "Meet The Staff" section.

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