

Willow's story

I applied to re-home a Hermann's tortoise through the Tortoise Protection Group. The owner had contacted the TPG and requested that they re-home her as she was no longer really able to provide adequate care for her. The lady clearly cared for the tortoise, but wanted her to go to an experienced tortoise owner who could offer her a better quality of life, than she could. All I knew was that it was a Testudo Hermanni Boetgerri, the Eastern Herman's Tortoise.

The owner had emailed a picture and we thought that the tortoise was around 18 months old, but it transpired on collection that the emailed picture was in fact an old one. The actual tortoise is about 3 years old and much larger than the one shown on the original photo

The owner showed me to the back porch of the house and she removed the tortoise from her housing for me to see. The tortoise was clearly a Thb female and was housed in a vivarium measuring about 30 inches. The lady said she had taken out the lights to cool down assuming I wanted the vivarium. I politely said I did not use them for my tortoises and explained that I have a huge purpose built wooden tortoise house with free access to an enclosed garden and heating and lighting in the house all the time. I explained that we have 24 hour running CCTV so can see them all the time and we feed a mainly weed diet, allowing the tortoises to graze and roam as they would naturally.

I then examined the tortoise, who was very cold, having been sat on newspaper with no heat for some time, she was a bit nervous and pulled her head in opening her mouth, but she had bright eyes, no sign of discharge or nasal bubbling and was responsive. She had very over grown claws. They had grown right round and were pressing on her skin, almost ingrown. She was a bit lumpy with evidence of obesity, possibly from a high protein diet or inadequate exercise and she had never been wormed. She was of Slovenian origin (farmed) and had been purchased from a pet shop 2 years previously.

I asked what she had been fed, and was told cabbage, broccoli, fruit, tomatoes, cucumber etc. I explained that I weed feed mine and the lady confirmed that the tortoise did have some dandelions and some time out in the garden. However, she was clear that her children had got bored with the tortoise and did not bother with her anymore and was very grateful I was taking her.



Since her arrival, I have clipped her claws and she has completed the worming process. She is much more confident now and has also fed from my hand and loves dandelions! She is eating well although I have to watch her diet as she is over weight for her size and age. She is now free to wander in and out of the garden. Initially she was dashing around as if excited by all the space, but has since settled to a favourite place in the tortoise house and a favourite place in the rockery outside. She is a lovely little tortoise and we are very pleased with her.

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