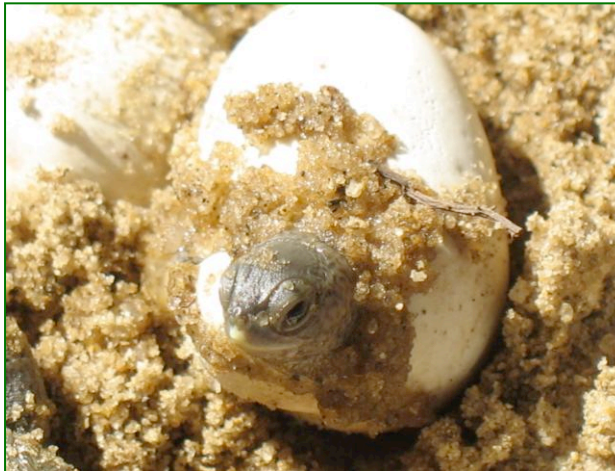


## Why turtle gardens?

Turtles face many threats to their survival including loss of nesting habitat and road mortality, especially when females are on the move, seeking suitable areas to dig their nests and deposit their eggs. Often, the female turtles cross busy roads in order to find nesting locations.

By creating turtle gardens, we are providing nesting sites which may be used by turtles that would otherwise cross roadways to lay their eggs. In addition, if the females are left with only sub-optimal locations to nest, it will be less likely that their nests will produce baby turtles and the survival of hatchlings may be compromised.

In combination with a conservation program, turtle gardens can increase the number of turtle nests and the number of hatchlings.



### Signs of a Successful Turtle Garden

Turtle eggs will hatch after an appropriate incubation period, depending on the species of turtle and the local climate. Often, eggs laid in late spring and early summer will hatch in late summer or early fall.

Look for signs of baby turtles; either the hatchlings themselves, tiny turtle tracks, or an emergence hole in the nest location.

Hatchlings should be allowed to return to the wild.

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Photos by: Bill Allan, Barbara Brennessel, Don Lewis



## Turtle Gardens

*or...Growing Baby Turtles*

*A brief guide to creating  
and maintaining nesting  
habitat for turtles*



### Turtle Gardens:

- keep turtles off roadways
- protect threatened species
- a natural way to landscape

## Creating Turtle Gardens



“location,  
location,  
location”

### Site Selection

Turtle gardens are most effective if they are placed in an area where turtles are known to nest or where turtles have been observed to travel on their way to nesting sites.

Turtles often prefer to nest in areas that remain sunny for a good part of the day.

When possible, the turtle garden should be placed in a location that does not require the female turtle or her hatchlings to cross roadways.



*Turtle garden on private property.*

### First Steps

- If the potential site is on private property, communicate need for improving nesting habitat with the property owner and gain permission to clear space for the turtle garden.
- If the turtle garden is part of a broader program on conservation lands, discuss the project with all stakeholders.
- Secure permissions and permits from the appropriate boards and commissions.

### Guide to Creating a Turtle Garden

1. Clear the area by removing vegetation, including all plant roots.
2. Consider installing edging to deter incursion of vegetation.
3. Site should be finished prior to nesting season and may need to be maintained on an annual basis.
4. If substrate supplementation is required, use a type of soil/substrate that is preferred by the turtle species that will be nesting on the site.



*Turtle garden on conservation land; nests marked with blue flags and protected with predator excluders.*