



# WHY DESERT TORTOISES?

A symbol of the desert and California's state reptile, the desert tortoise was easy to find not too many years ago. With increasing human impacts in the desert, tortoise numbers have declined to the point that it is now on the Federal List of Threatened Species, and is protected by law.



The Desert Tortoise Information and Youth Education Program offers a variety of different ways to teach about desert tortoises in your classroom. By teaching students about these animals at a young age, desert tortoises will have a more promising future.



[LivingDesert.org/Education/Tortoise](http://LivingDesert.org/Education/Tortoise)



The Desert Managers Group (DMG) is a partnership of county, state and federal agencies working together to conserve and enhance the California desert for current and future generations.  
[www.dmg.gov](http://www.dmg.gov)



The Living Desert is a remarkable zoo and botanical garden representing the deserts of North America and Africa. Its mission is desert conservation through preservation, education and appreciation.



47900 PORTOLA AVE. PALM DESERT, CA 92260  
760-346-5694 [LivingDesert.org](http://LivingDesert.org)



# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO DESERT TORTOISE INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES





# MOJAVE MAXINE EMERGENCE CONTEST!

The Mojave Maxine Emergence Contest is a great way to begin to teach students about desert tortoises. Students learn about brumation (the reptilian form of hibernation) and have the opportunity to guess when Maxine will emerge from her burrow in the spring.

## WHO CAN ENTER?

Youth from all 9 southern California counties (Inyo, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, Kern, Imperial, San Diego and Orange) are encouraged to enter. Anyone under 18 can submit a guess.

## HOW DO STUDENTS ENTER?

Students should visit [LivingDesert.org/Education/Tortoise](http://LivingDesert.org/Education/Tortoise) to participate.

## ARE THERE PRIZES?

Winners will receive T-shirts for their entire class, gift cards for themselves and their teacher, as well as a classroom visit from a desert tortoise and more.

Facebook.com/mojavemaxine  
Twitter @mojavemaxine



# TORTOISE TRUNKS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

## WHAT ARE THEY?

Tortoise trunks are complete tools for teaching about the desert tortoise in the classroom. Trunks include field-tested lesson plans, information packets, books, models and more.

## HOW DO I BORROW ONE?

- Trunks will be lent out for 2-week intervals, and can be picked up or shipped to you. (Shipping charges may apply)
- Go to [LivingDesert.org/Education/Tortoise](http://LivingDesert.org/Education/Tortoise) and click on 'Teachers' to get started.

## WHO CAN USE THEM?

Formal and informal educators in Southern California are eligible to borrow the trunks at no cost.



## K-2ND GRADE TRUNK

### What is a Desert Tortoise?

This trunk introduces your students to the desert tortoise; where it lives, its needs, and how tortoises and turtles differ from one another.

## 3RD-4TH GRADE TRUNK

### Needs of the Desert Tortoise

This trunk covers the Mojave Desert ecosystem and the niche of the desert tortoise. It also covers the history of land use in the Mojave.

## 5TH-6TH GRADE TRUNK

### Needs & Threats to the Desert Tortoise

This trunk describes the factors that have contributed to the decline of the desert tortoise and shows how students can contribute to their recovery.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL TRUNK

### Conserving the Desert Tortoise

This trunk shows students there are two distinct species of desert tortoise, how researchers track tortoises in the wild, as well as discusses gender and genetic differences in the species. Students will also learn how they can contribute to the desert tortoise's recovery.

## HIGH SCHOOL TRUNK

### Conserving the Desert Tortoise

This trunk describes the essential role the desert tortoise plays in its ecosystem and introduces students to methods used to study desert tortoises, as well as the struggles the species faces. Students will also learn how they can contribute to the desert tortoise's recovery.