

## The Great Turtle Rescue of 2009

One day last summer (2008), I heard my next-door neighbor's dogs barking a lot. They had obviously cornered something and were dashing about the yard, stopping to bark and paw. I looked over the fence and there was a turtle...So I got out the rake and shovel and put the turtle in my side yard so it could escape to where ever it came from.

**Introducing**, Trudy the Turtle, — a Western Painted Turtle.



Trudy proceeded to make her way into our pond and would come to the surface and beg like a dog whenever we came out to feed the fish.

Shortly after taking up residence in our pond, we noticed that Trudy had a spot on her back that was turning yellow. So with the help of a veterinarian friend in Knoxville, Tennessee (*home of the world's greats basketball coach, Pat Summitt and 8 time NCAA Champion Lady Vols*), I created Turtle Hospital in which Trudy was treated daily for 1 week.



Trudy stayed in the pond for a few more weeks and then left. I looked all over the yard and cul de sac but she had left...no note, nothing **OR SO WE THOUGHT** .....

Last week (2009), while working in the anal retentive lawn (see right), I went to clean the pond filter. And since the flowering trees have showered their blossoms into the pond, went to pull out the filter bag and filter...and what do I see in the pump housing area...A HATCHLING



So I grab it and rush it into the house....and then I find 2 more...and then 2 more

Then a dash to the pet store for something to hold them in and some food (and a rock in case they want to sit and chill).



.but then I find 2 more...and  
more and more



These little guys (or girls) are too cute and now too many for a small plastic reptile container. So it's back to the store for a 20 gallon long tank with a large rock...and a basking light, water filter....aquarium stand....

So now then there are 10 Western Painted Turtles...which are pretty cute . Introducing Donatella on far right...the smallest of them all.



Turns out turtles like to climb on each other...Donatella is attempting the very difficult four turtle pile up with 1/2 twist.





Here they are mimicking the Push me Pull you from Dr. Doolittle ... Turtles are very silly.



After a round table discussion, it became clear that 10 turtle hatchlings and a 20 gallon aquarium were not going to do....



So I packed up the kids and headed over to Lakeside Nature Center in Kansas City, Missouri.



Lakeside Nature Center is a place in Swope Park that rescues injured animals and also has educational programs about native Missouri animals.



And it turned out that they did not have any Western Painted Turtles and would take mine and use some for educational programs and release the others in a safe place near the Kansas City Zoo. They even had out the description of the hatchlings.

The hatchlings would love a nice big 50 gallon aquarium like this....and they were SO ready to dive into their new lives!



We plan to visit them a lot!



So if you are at the KC Zoo or Lakeside Nature Center and see someone like this....it may be Starsky or Hatch

and Trudy...if you are reading this - Please do not drop off any more kiddies in the pool .



Article & photos by KB Hersh