

# Common Eastern Box Turtle



- **Box turtles are omnivorous and eat lots of types of plants, berries, mushrooms, worms, and bugs.**
- **They spend a lot of time buried in leaves, coming out to eat.**
- **The female turtle usually lays 3 to 6 eggs in early summer, with hatching occurring 2 to 3 months later.**
- **Its average size is around 4 to 6 inches long.**
- **Box turtles are diurnal, meaning they are active during the day.**
- **Adult box turtles are the only turtles that can completely close (or box) themselves into their shells.**



## What can we learn from this beautiful creation of the common eastern box turtle?

Do you ever feel just plain and common, like maybe you don't matter? Don't believe that lie from the enemy! You are very special! Let's think about the box turtle. It is known as common, however, this little animal is far from common. It has some extraordinary qualities from which we can learn some great encouraging lessons.

Box turtles will often live around other box turtles without aggression, which is rare for many animals, as they often fight over territory. Maybe we can be more like the box turtle in this way. In the Bible, Romans 14:19 tells us this, "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." We can work to be peaceful with others - even when we are different.

A box turtle will usually spend its entire life in a small area. This "home" area is near where it hatched from its egg and is around 200 to 300 yards in diameter. It has a strong sense of where its home is, and if moved out of the range, the box turtle might spend its whole life searching for its home. Maybe the turtle understands contentment and appreciation better than we do sometimes. Perhaps we could be more like the turtle and find ways to grow where we are and help others who are nearby us - being content and thankful that we are just where God has us for the moment.

Another lesson we can learn from the box turtle involves one of its favorite food sources, the mayapple, a wildflower that produces little round fruits. Since they don't produce nectar for bees, which pollinate flowers, mayapples depend on box turtles as their main seed dispersers. Box turtles will eat the low-growing mayapple fruits. When those seeds pass through a box turtle's gut and are pooped out, they are more likely to germinate and create more mayapples. It's a nice balance and shows a mutualistic relationship where both species are benefitting. The Lord is providing food for the turtles, and He is providing a way for the mayapple to continue to grow more plants. Neither the turtle nor the mayapple is worrying about anything. The Bible tells us in Matthew 6:25, "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life - whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?"

## Creation kindness for box turtles

IF YOU SEE A BOX TURTLE CROSSING THE ROAD, GENTLY MOVE IT OFF THE ROAD BUT IN THE SAME DIRECTION IT WAS HEADING.

IT'S FUN TO OBSERVE AND EXAMINE GOD'S CREATION, BUT ALWAYS KEEP THE BOX TURTLE IN THE SAME AREA YOU FIND IT, SINCE IT LIKES TO STAY CLOSE TO HOME.



## Be like the box turtle!

Adult box turtles have a special ability to close their shells completely, unlike other turtles. Even younger box turtles cannot do this until they are a few years old. As young turtles, they must first grow and mature before they can be better protected with a fully-closing shell.

When we are young, we can start learning God's word and spend time with Him in prayer. Then as we grow older, we will have better protection against the enemy! Scripture and time with the Lord can be like our box turtle shells—helping protect us more and more from lies and attacks of Satan as we grow in wisdom and confidence through our relationship with Jesus.

Colossians 2:6-7

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.



Use this link to learn more about box turtles and print out an activity sheet.

<https://answersingenesis.org/kids/animals/box-turtles/>

**IMPORTANT:**

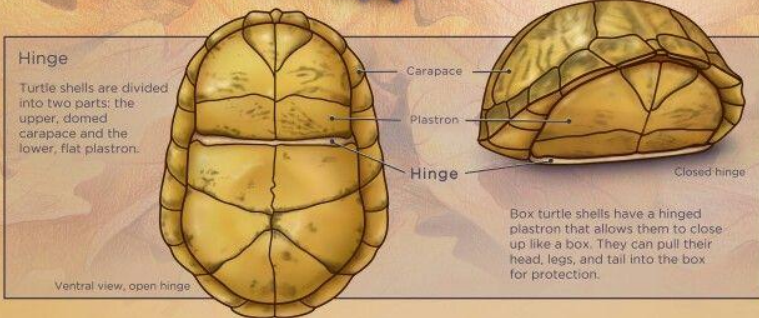
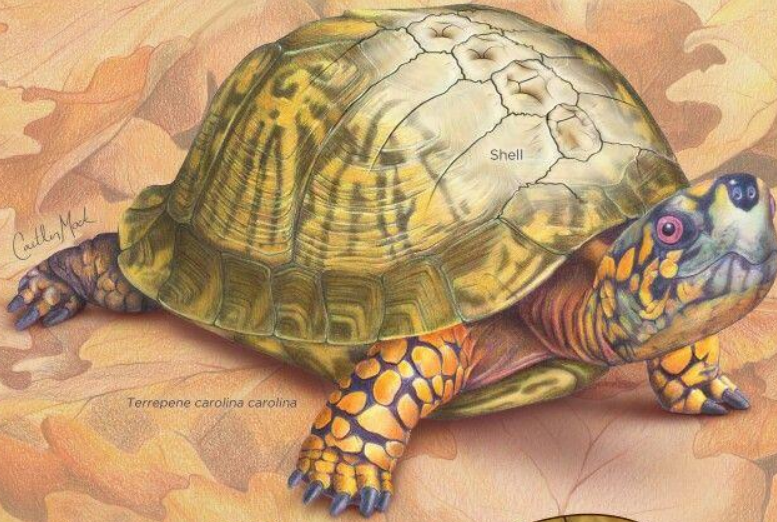
You will see information in mainstream science articles that claims turtles have evolved over millions of years. Just remember that God created turtles as turtles in the beginning, and they have not evolved from another species.

**Activities:**

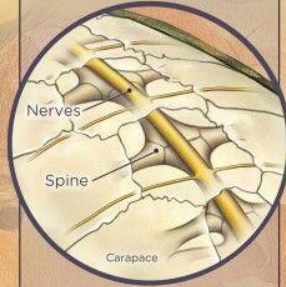
Draw a box turtle and label some of its parts. If you live in an area with woods, take a nature walk to see if you might see a box turtle. You will have to look closely and be really observant.



# Anatomy of the Box Turtle Shell

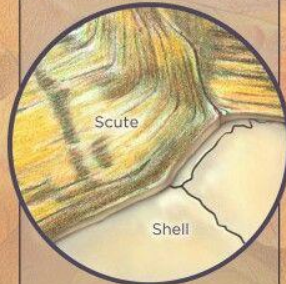


## Spinal Nerves



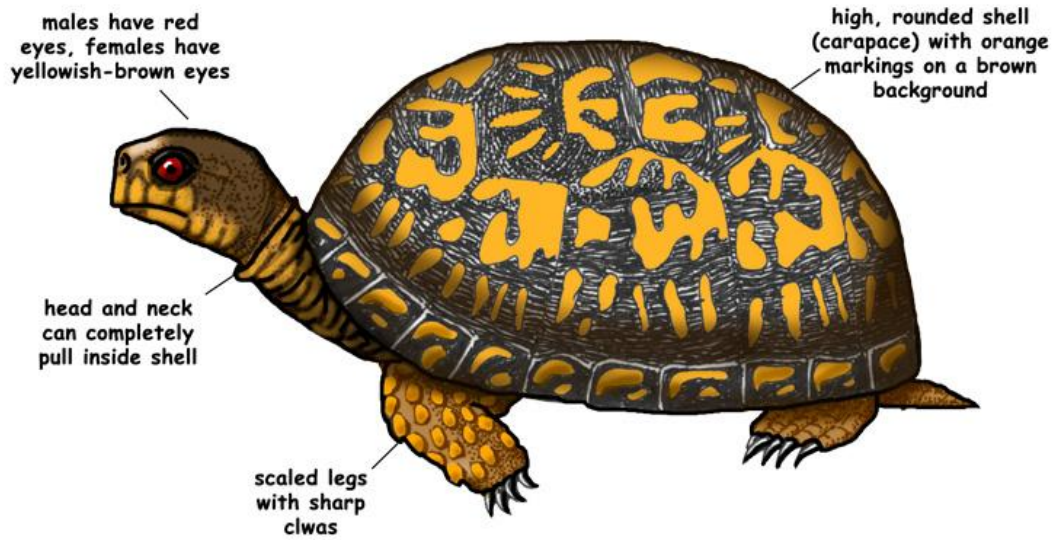
The inner surface of the turtle shell's domed top, or carapace, is lined with nerves. The main spinal nerve runs between the spine and the carapace. These nerves allow the turtle to feel through its protective shell.

## Shell Layers



The "shell" of a turtle is actually made of two layers. The inner shell is part of the skeleton and made of bone. Scutes cover the shell and are made of keratin, the same material found in our fingernails.

## Eastern Box Turtle *Terrapene carolina*



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