



## Meet & Greet: Blueberry

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<https://youtube.com/watch?v=V5pNB4o7VGy>

<https://nerdfighteria.info/v/V5pNB4o7VGy>

### ===== Introduction =====

Hi Guys! We're back at Animal Wonders and I have another animal for you to meet. She's an oldie, but she goes to more public presentations than any of our other animals, because she's just so darn awesome.

### ===== Blueberry =====

Meet Blueberry the Northern Blue-Tongued Skink.

Blueberry came to us like so many of our other animals do: from an owner who just didn't want to care for her anymore. They said that she had come from someone else, and they'd had her for a couple years, but they were moving to a new state and they didn't want to try and travel with her.

We asked for as much information about her as he knew, and he told us that her previous owner had said that she would only eat snails, and so he was catching snails from the wild and feeding her those.

When we rescue an animal, they always get an initial exam by our veterinarian, to see what their overall health status is. Blueberry had a respiratory infection and scabbed over abrasions and inflammation on the sides of her mouth and gums and severe trauma to her toes. We set her up in a clean enclosure and began the rehabilitation process.

We started her on a course of antibiotics to treat the respiratory infection and then we addressed the wounds on the sides of her mouth. She had several layers of built-up skin and scabbing that we were able to soften with warm, wet towels and gentle massage.

We determined that the trauma to her mouth and gums was caused by the hard snail shells that she had to crush and chew in order to eat.

The next health concern was her toes. She had many layers of retained shed, or left-over scales, which over time had caused constriction and amputated her toes. This meant that she hadn't been kept on the right substrate or given the proper levels of humidity.

We began treating her toes by letting her soak in a tub of warm water and then gently removing as much of the retained shed as we could.

Her toes were very tender and raw, so we started her on an anti-inflammatory and pain medication.

Now that her immediate healthcare issues were being taken care of, we were able to focus more on her long-term care. While snails are O.K. to feed a skink as a treat, as long as they aren't taken from the wild, they shouldn't be the only food offered.

We made her a plate of fresh greens, yams, and mealworms, and she gobbled it up. The next meal we offered was red leaf lettuce, blueberries, and cockroaches. Once again, she ate it all.

It turns out Blueberry enjoys a wide variety of foods, and has a great appetite, so it's important to always offer new foods to an animal, even if you think they won't eat them. They just might surprise you.

After a week on her new diet, we discovered Blueberry had worms. So, she was put on a dewormer and it was quickly resolved. She

most likely got the intestinal parasites from the wild caught snails she'd been given, which is why it is not a good idea to give your pets anything that is not from an approved source.

After caring for Blueberry for several weeks, it became really obvious that she needed some kind of long-term care for her toes. We needed to house her on something that would be soft enough to not hurt the pads, or tender nubs of her toes, but would offer enough traction that she could move around.

Reptile carpet was the perfect solution, except that Blue-Tongued Skinks like to burrow, so it wouldn't allow that natural behavior. After some consideration, we determined the health and comfort of her feet and toes was the priority, and we could supplement her natural behavior in other ways.

This is Blueberry's home now. She's been with us since 2010, and she's doing really well. She has her reptile carpet for her feet and her toes, she has her bark tunnel to simulate hiding in a burrow, and she has fake plants that she likes to hide behind and peak out from.

She enjoys her fresh greens and veggies and occasional fruit. Blueberries continue to be her favorite, but she also likes papaya and banana. She also loves mealworms, waxworms, crickets, and cockroaches.

She still bears the scars on the sides of her mouth, and she has flareups every once in a while. Her toes and feet remain our biggest concern, but she hasn't had any new inflammation or raw spots, so she's doing really well on her reptile carpet.

Blueberry does enjoy getting out to explore. She's curious about her surroundings, and she doesn't mind being held, but her favorite thing still, is hanging out under her bark tunnel, pretending that she's burrowing.

We love Blueberry's success story because she overcame so many health issues, and she's had a great life since being at Animal Wonders.

I'm so grateful to be able to offer a happy and healthy home to an animal that hasn't been given all they deserve in life, and it's my privilege to share her with you.

If you'd like to meet and get to know more of our animals, you can find them in our Meet and Greets Playlist, and if you'd like to go on an adventure with us every week, subscribe to our YouTube channel, Animal Wonders Montana, and we'll see you next week.

Thanks Guys!