



FIG. 6.1—Jenny's back right foot pad upon arrival, 26 September 1996.



FIG. 6.2—Jenny's back right foot pad two years later, 26 August 1998.

to be sloughing. The heels of her pads were dry and split with deep vertical cracks.

The deteriorated and infected condition of Jenny's feet appeared to be causing her extreme pain. Her behavior pattern after arrival was to lie down every 20 to 30 minutes to avoid the pain she experienced while standing. At every opportunity, Jenny would submerge in one of the ponds or the creek. The cool water appeared to help relieve her pain, and because she was buoyant, she was not putting weight on her feet. As days passed, Jenny showed marked improvement, indicated by less time spent reclining and the recovering condition of her pads and nails.

Jenny was conditioned to place her infected feet into tubs of lukewarm, diluted apple cider vinegar twice a day. Being a natural remedy, apple cider vinegar works exceptionally well in stopping infection as well as conditioning the flesh of the foot. After the initial soaking, necrotic tissue was trimmed to expose the infected areas. During a series of three trimmings over a 6-week period, more than 2 inches of foot pad was removed. Following the foot soaks and trimmings, Kopertox was applied generously. Immediately following treatments, Jenny was released into a 40-acre natural-habitat yard. Her daily activity included mud bath excavation, spring water swims, digging, dusting, napping, grazing, forag-

ing, and tree felling. Over the course of each day, Jenny walked many miles, repeatedly submerged herself in fresh water, and moved several hundred pounds of earth and vegetation.

Pad trimming was discontinued after three sessions (6 weeks). Daily Kopertox application continued for 6 months, and apple cider vinegar soaks continued for 1 year. Jenny's pads have required no further trimming since her arrival 2 years ago. Her pads and nails remain at optimum length and condition and have shown no cracks, splits, overgrowth, or infections. Her pads and nails are supple and healthy (Figure 6.2).

ENVIRONMENT, DIET, AND MANAGEMENT

When a natural-habitat existence is not possible, every effort can be made to imitate the environment and diet of the wild. Natural substrates can be added. For indoor facilities, floors can be remodeled with a more suitable surface. Diets can be modified to include live vegetation and daily supplements of fresh-cut browse. With minimal effort, most facilities can be converted to a chain-free management system. Diminishing stress by attending to the natural and basic needs of the elephant will help to ensure healthy feet as well as overall mental and physical well-being.