



Husbandry Requirements for Royal Python.

Royal Pythons originally come from scrubland in Western and Central Africa.

Size of Vivarium

General dimensions for a snake should be: Length – minimum 1 x total length of snake. Width: minimum ½ x total length of snake.

Temperature Gradient:

All reptiles need a temperature gradient in their vivarium: i.e. one end cooler than the other so that they can then select where they are most comfortable to achieve their Preferred Body Temperature (PBT). Heat lamps should therefore be placed one end of the vivarium not on the side.

Royal Python temperature range: 25 – 30 °C (21°C at night).

UVB light: This is advised for Royal Pythons particularly if at risk of or showing signs of Metabolic Bone Disease. Bulbs should provide 2-6% UVB and need to be changed every 3 - 6 months.

Photoperiod: Lights should be kept on for 12 hours a day leaving a 12 hour 'night' period but it is even better if the photoperiod mimics that of their natural habitat.

Diet: Royal Pythons are carnivorous and should be fed baby mice ('pinkies') up to adult mice/rats depending on size 2-3 times per week.

Water: Provide a large bowl of water with easy access in and out – this will also keep humidity levels at a good level as Royal Pythons require 50-80% humidity which is much higher than normal household levels. It is especially important when shedding to provide good levels of water to bask in and keep humidity levels high. Misting with cooled boiled water several times per day will also help with humidity or commercial units are available to keep humidity at pre-determined levels.

Environmental enrichment:

A hide should always be provided – preferably two, one at the warm end of the vivarium and one at the cool end so the dragon can use whichever is at the most comfortable temperature.

Rocks are also good enrichment for Royal Pythons and provide an abrasive surface to start shedding. Hot rocks immediately under the heat lamp or hide are not a good idea as they can get too hot and cause burns but one close by for basking will be appreciated.

Newspaper is a good floor lining or substrate as it is easy to clean and to monitor urinary/ faecal output.

NB: All reptiles can carry bacteria such as *Salmonella* and you should wash hands after any handling.

