



Small Pythons



Children's Python Black Blotched Python

- **Reptivite**, and/or **Rep-Cal Herptivite** vitamin supplements should be incorporated into the diet on a monthly basis to ensure that the snake is receiving the amount of vitamins required.
- It is normal for snakes to refuse food leading up to sloughing.
- Food should not be offered during this period.

SLOUGHING:

- Snakes will "slough" or shed their skin on several occasions throughout the year.
- Injuries and feeding regimes are the major factors influencing the sloughing process.
- The eyes become opaque and the skin appears cloudy before a slough, increased hiding and unwillingness to be fed or handled may also be observed at this time.
- Therefore food offering should be minimized or eliminated for the period of the slough and handling only in necessary.
- Snakes will rub their nasal areas on something rough to initiate the slough, and will continuously rub themselves until complete.
- Skins should be examined and growth rate and vent scales should be counted and recorded for personal and submittable records.
- If problems occur and the snake is having problems shedding its old skin, you can soak the animal in a bucket of warm water for up to 2-hours.
- Manual aid can also be provided with problem snakes but extreme care should be taken.
- Manual shedding of the eye scales should **NEVER BE ATTEMPTED!!**
- If this is necessary consult a veterinarian.
- Snakes that soak themselves are not always getting ready to slough; mites, lice and ticks can also cause irritation.
- These external parasites are usually visible around the eyes, vent and under the scales.
- Snakes will separate their scales under UV and also in water in an attempt to rid themselves of this infestation.
- These problems can be addressed quickly by using a **Reptile Science Mite and Tick Spray**.
- Injuries, bacterial and fungal problems should be referred to a Veterinarian

LICENCES AND REGULATIONS:

- To keep any species of snake you must first obtain a RECREATIONAL WILDLIFE LICENCE (Reptiles), from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

ENCLOSURE:

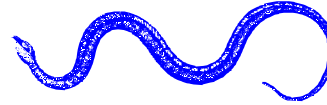
- Small python varieties should be housed in a **URS Reptile Vivarium** three-foot (90cm) long (minimum) enclosure.
- Enclosures should provide easy access for cleaning, feeding and retrieving.
- Security is essential for all snake enclosures as all reptiles especially snakes are excellent escape artists, and will escape through even the smallest of gaps.
- Ensure that the enclosure is well ventilated to prevent heat and humidity build up.
- When choosing a substrate make sure that it is easy to clean and replace.
- Care should be taken when deciding on what substrate is best for your particular animal; some substrates are abrasive and can damage the vulnerable areas, such as the eyes and the cloaca.
- Also be certain that pieces of the substrate cannot become lodged in the nasal areas, or that large pieces cannot be mistakenly ingested.
- Damage to the eyes should be avoided when possible as this may result in poor feeding and the handler being bitten by mistake.
- Replacing substrates on a regular basis will prevent the risk of parasite infestation.
- All snakes should be provided with a hide, hides provide a secure area for the snake when they feel insecure, or moving into their torpid period etc.

- Without hides snakes have a tendency to become stressed and agitated and can result in damage and sickness to the animal.
- Small pythons are ambush predators and may prefer to hide before being fed, such behaviour is no cause for alarm.
- When choosing a water bowl consider the fact that pythons will bathe to relieve irritation, cool down, or to soften skin before they slough.
- To prevent unnecessary spilling and mess only half fill water bowls.
- When ornamenting your reptile enclosure, ensure that the chosen furniture is placed securely so that the snake cannot tip or knock it over on to itself causing injuries.

HEATING:

- Heat sources should always be attached to a THERMOSTAT.
- NEVER OVERHEAT YOUR SNAKES.
- Several heat sources can be considered when heating a snake enclosure.
- All heat sources should be low-light emitting as small pythons are generally nocturnal and bright white lights may cause irritation when attached to a thermostat on a 24-hour cycle.
- **Zoomed Nocturnal Infrared Heat Lamp, Zoomed Ceramic Infrared Heat Emitter, Zoomed Reptitherm U.T.H.** and **Habistat Heat Mats** provide a radiant heat source that is preferred for use in python enclosures.
- Heat lamps should be placed out of reach, or caged.
- Heat pads should cover between 1/3-1/2 of the base.
- An acceptable temperature range is between 25-30 degrees Celsius.
- The thermostats probe should be placed directly under or above the heat source.
- This area should be kept at the highest temperature level your snake requires, so that a temperature gradient of about 5 degrees can be established in the enclosure.
- Water bowls should be positioned in the opposite corner to the heat source to prevent humidity build up, and aid the temperature gradient.

- Mature snakes should be allowed to enter a torpid period during the cooler months.
- Allowing snakes to follow a natural cooling process will increase the length of your snake's life.
- Care should be taken with the feeding regime so that NO undigested food remains in the digestive system when entering the cooling process, as undigested food will decay resulting in possibly fatal infections.
- Temperatures in the reptile enclosure should be maintained at 10-15 degrees Celsius to prevent chilling.



LIGHTING:

- Although pythons are generally nocturnal they still require UV light.
- Twelve hours of UV light should be provided daily.
- UV light can be delivered through the new **Arcadia 23W D3 Compact Reptile Lamp**.

CLEANING:

- Reptile safe cleaners such as **Reptile Science Cage Cleaner** should always be used when cleaning your reptile enclosure.
- Snakes must never be allowed to lie in soiled or wet substrates, as this can lead to numerous health problems.
- Enclosures and furniture should be cleaned weekly and excrement, regurgitated food and spilled water should be attended to immediately.

FEEDING:

- When feeding snakes tongs should always be used.
- Hand feeding is not recommended as it may intimidate the animal.
- Hands have often been mistaken as food where tongs are not used.
- Food should be offered every 2-3 days in juvenile snakes and weekly in mature animals.
- A lapse of several weeks in the feeding regime can be implemented to prevent obesity.
- Food should be offered by gently shaking the prey in front of the snake.
- Frozen mice are recommended as the stable food for small captive breed pythons.