

# Choosing the Right Enclosure for Your Pet Reptile



"The Vivarium itself is as vital to the correct provision of an animal as is the provision of the pertinent heating and lighting systems. These are not just boxes in which an animal is living, but rather they are a core part of the technology needed to ensure high levels of health and well being. Therefore, choosing the right type and size of vivarium, then installing the correct decoration or naturalistic habitat alongside the correct electronics is as of vital importance to overall health and well being as every other part of the system."

**John Courtney-Smith MRSB, Head of Science and Innovation at Arcadia Reptile**

Start

## Step # 1 - Enclosure Size

Make sure the enclosure is at least the \*minimum recommended size for the species you are keeping. There are many opinions on what the minimum recommended sizes should be for many species of reptiles and so its best to only follow factual, well researched recommendations from credible sources.

Once you have selected a suitable size, move onto step # 2 - Choosing your reptiles life support system

## Step # 2 - Life Support System

This includes the heating, lighting and ventilation systems that are integral to your reptiles health and well being. Most reptile enclosures have external lighting as its safer, more effective at maintaining correct ambient temps and provides more room for the inhabitants. Internal lighting makes as much as the top 12 inches unusable due to unsafe UVB levels. Internal lighting can also burn reptiles and is more reflective causing unnecessary stress for your pet.

Does the Life Support System satisfy all of the needs for your pet reptile without reducing the minimum enclosure size (usable internal space)?

Yes

No

If not, increase the size of your enclosure to allow for the area that internal lighting makes unusable. This is usually the top 12 inches that has dangerously high UVB levels. Most high output linear light fixtures need to be placed 10 to 12 inches above the reptiles basking spot.

## Step # 3 - Enclosure Design

Correctly designed enclosures are secure (lockable), and are made with the pets needs first and foremost. The substrate lip height should allow for your pets digging and burrowing needs. The acrylic or glass doors should not be reflective and this issue is usually solved with external lighting, which directs the lighting down towards the bottom. Front vents will also help increase airflow and will help prevent fogging on the doors that usually happens with poorly designed enclosures.

Once you have selected an enclosure that is secure, non reflective and has proper front and top ventilation, it is time to consider the materials its made from.

## Step # 4 - Materials

Most larger enclosures in the USA today are made from PVC foam board, but some cheaper PVC materials can contain harmful chemicals that may cause serious issues for your pet reptile. Always select USA made enclosures from a reputable manufacturer that uses high quality, USA made, chemical free PVC foam board. Screen tops should be made from aluminum or stainless steel and should let at least 70% of UVB to penetrate through the screen. Warning: do not use galvanized screens as the zinc used in this process can emit toxic gasses when heated at a high temperature.

Once you are satisfied that your enclosure materials are safe for your pet reptile, it is time to consider the aesthetics of your new enclosure.

## Step # 5 - Aesthetics

Many keepers make the mistake of selecting appearance over the size, the life support system, the enclosure design and the materials used. Your enclosure can and should look great in your home or office, but there is no reason to choose the appearance over the necessary features when you can have all of these key features and, a beautiful looking enclosure too. Don't get fooled into purchasing because of an external embellishment when the actual enclosure lacks the necessary features that provides your pet with all that it needs to really thrive in its artificial habitat.

At Maximum Reptile™ we have addressed all of these 5 steps and with our commitment to quality, innovation and superior designs, you can be assured that your Pet reptiles have the very best enclosure that will enable you to provide the optimum habitat for its unique needs. **Maximum Reptile™ - Better by Design™**