

Diamond Pythons

Morelia spilota

Introduction and Origin

Diamond pythons are found throughout Australia with the exception of southern Victoria, Tasmania and the arid central and western areas. These snakes can be found in a range of habitats from cool to warm rainforests, dry sclerophyll forests, open grassy areas and woodlands

Characteristics

The diamond python can grow to a length of 8 ft to 9 ft with an approximate diameter of 4". Diamond pythons are generally a glossy olive green to black

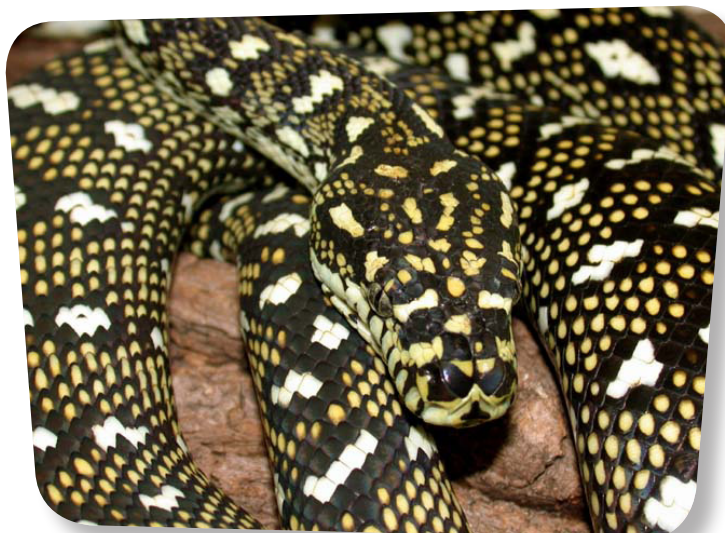
above with cream to golden yellow spots. These spots form a variegated series of diamond shaped patterns along their backs.

Behaviour

Diamond pythons are primarily an arboreal (tree dwelling) species but can be found on the ground on occasions. This python is generally nocturnal (night active) but can be found active throughout the day either basking or searching for a mate. Generally they spend their days hiding in hollow logs, rock crevices, hollow branches or simply coiled on a branch.

Licensing

Diamond pythons in New South Wales are required to be kept under a reptile keeper's licence. The licence is easily obtainable by phoning National Parks and Wildlife on (02) 9585-6406 or by picking up an application form from Kellyville Pets. It is presently law in New South Wales to have a licence, without it, it is impossible to gain an animal legally.



Diet and Water

In general all captive bred snakes are raised on rats and mice. It is recommended that the snake be switched from live mice and rats to frozen ones as soon as possible. The frozen rats and mice are more readily available than the live and are generally considered safer for your reptile. The size and age of the animal will determine the size of the mouse or rat to be fed as well as the frequency of feedings. The diamond python will prefer an interrupted feeding schedule. Another practice that is recommended is the use of a reptile specific reptile supplement, this is available in a powder form and can be either added to water or dusted onto the rats and mice before feeding. They will also require a bowl of water for drinking

Housing

There are many various materials which indoor reptile enclosures can be constructed from, some which are more suited than others for specific species. In general it is recommended that an enclosure constructed from timber is better suited than a full glass one for any species of python. This is mainly due to the timbers ability to retain the heat. This snake requires an enclosure with height due to their arboreal nature and at least 3 ft

This snake usually grows to approx. 2-3 metres in length

Diamond Pythons

4 ft in length. This snake will both grow to be quite, large so it is recommended to house the adult snake in an outdoor enclosure. Outdoor enclosures can be an aviary or cattery at least 4 ft x 6 ft.

Heating

Diamond pythons require some type of heating to be available in their enclosures.

The temperature gradient required by diamond python is between 24°C and 28°C.

These temperature gradients are gained by the use of a heat lamp.

The recommended heat lamp are the ones that do not emit any visible light, eg Zoo Med nocturnal infrared heat lamp and Zoo Med ceramic infrared heat emitter. This python is primarily nocturnal so a heat lamp, which emits visible light would cause the animal to shy away and stay hidden. Heat lamps are required to be used in conjunction with a thermostat- this will allow a controlled temperature to be maintained at all times. They will also reduce the chance of overheating the animal causing heat exhaustion and even death. The thermostat probe should be located in the centre of the enclosure with a thermometer under it, to allow the temperature to be set correctly. An outdoor enclosure should have a timber hide box where a heat lamp, with attached thermostat, can be placed to allow the animal to warm itself.

Learn more from the team at Kellyville Pets

Lighting

It is recommended that any reptile that is primarily kept in indoor enclosures be given a UV light and this python is no exception. The light itself should be a reptile specific UV light, eg Repti-sun 5.0, which should be illuminated for 14 hours per day. The inclusion of the UV light will provide the essential vitamins that help with the absorption of calcium and digestion of food.

Tank Decoration

Diamond pythons are a large species that frequent the trees in nature. For this reason the inclusion of sturdy branches, vines and logs in their enclosures will make them feel more at home. A strong branch or log should be placed directly under the heat source to give the python a place to bask and gain heat.

The inclusion of a hide box or hollow log in the enclosure is recommended as this allows the animal to have a safe place in which to rest through the daylight hours.

There are a variety of different substrates that are available to cover the base of the enclosure. These include Desert Blend (crushed walnut shells) and Breeders Choice (newspaper based kitty litter). Each of these substrates are well suited for use in a python enclosure as they are easily cleaned and provide a dry, healthy environment.



Further information on diet, hygiene, vitamins, Vets and much more is available from the team at Kellyville Pets.

At Kellyville Pets, we encourage responsible pet ownership.

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