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Ball Python

Python regius

Lifespan: 20-30+ years.

Size: Adults can reach 4 to 6 feet in length, with males usually slightly smaller than females.

Sexing: There are different methods of sexing snakes: comparing tail lengths, popping, and probing. An experienced veterinarian or breeder should do popping or probing.

Enclosure: Ball Pythons do best in a tank that provides them with room to roam around and exercise. A 3'x2x2 glass or PVC enclosure is adequate for a single adult but a larger 4x2x2 tank is better. For a baby or hatchling, a standard 18x18x18 tank with screen top will do. Snakes are excellent at nosing their way through tight places. Snakes can escape from regular screen tops, so the lid needs to be secured with a lock. ***Piscès recommends: ExoTerra All-Glass Terrariums and EcoFlex PVC Reptile Lounges.***

Hiding/Climbing Spots: A snake cave or another hiding spot is recommended. Having more than one hide is recommended, giving the snake a choice between a warm hide and a cooler one. Size of the cave is dependent on the size of the snake as they light tight spaces to curl up.

Humidity: The enclosure should be well-ventilated and misted to keep the humidity high (60% to 80%) and aid in the process of shedding. A moss hide helps maintain high humidity when the snake is shedding. If your Ball Python is having trouble a 20-minute warm bath can help to lift the dead skin off the new layer of skin. Use a hygrometer to monitor humidity levels. Provide a water dish large enough for the snake to curl its entire body into for bathing and to help with shedding.

Substrate: Cypress mulch, or Soils are best for substrates and moss can be added to the tank for extra humidity. ***Piscès recommends: Zoomed Forest Floor.***

Heat: Maintain a temperature of as low as 78°F at night. An ambient temperature of 82°F - 85°F should be maintained during the day, with a basking spot of 90°F - 95°F. Snakes cannot sustain normal body functions if kept at a temperature that is too low. Use a heat bulb on one end of the tank to create a temperature gradient or an under-tank heat mat may also be applied. ***Piscès recommends: ExoTerra and Arcadia bulbs and fixtures.***

UV Lighting: Ball Pythons are nocturnal and do not require UVB lighting but the addition of UVB to the enclosure is though to provide some benefits to snakes. ***Piscès Recommends: Arcadia T5 Pro 6% Kit***

Feeding: Feed both juvenile and adult Ball Pythons once a week. Snakes normally eat live prey, but they can be switched to frozen food in captivity. (Be sure that the food is thoroughly thawed before offering it to your snake). Do not feed prey larger than the maximum girth of the snake.

Handling: When handling a baby or juvenile Ball Python it is best to pick them up slowly but confidently, with no hesitation. If you hesitate or are nervous the snake might become frightened. Ball pythons are generally docile but can behave aggressively if they feel threatened. If this happens when you are handling your snake, return it to its tank immediately. Avoid touching the snake's head until it is comfortable with you.

Cleaning: Snake cages should be cleaned out once a. Cyprus mulch can be replaced about once a month, if feces are spot cleaned when the animal defecates. Fresh water should be offered every day and the water dish should be sanitized once a week.

Safe Handling of Reptiles*: As with all living creatures, reptiles can carry microorganisms (including Salmonella) which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet reptile roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

Your New Pet: It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness. Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you, but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat. A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.

Pisces Recommended Setup:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Glass/PVC terrarium (Exo Terra Large Low 36x16x12 or Eco-Flex 4x2x2 PVC enclosure) ❑ Exo Terra lock to prevent escapes ❑ Exo Terra Reptile caves (medium to XXL) ❑ Exo Terra or Komodo fake jungle plants for enrichment and foliage ❑ Exo Terra Misting bottle or MistKing System ❑ Large Exo terra or Pet-Tekk water dish (large enough to soak in) ❑ Exo Terra Metal Feeding Tongs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Zoomed Forest Floor Bedding ❑ Exo Terra 150watt Intense Basking Lamp & Flukers 8.5in Dimmable Deluxe Clamp Lamp ❑ Exo Terra medium under tank heat mat with an Exo Terra 100-300watt electronic thermostat to maintain temperature ❑ Arcadia T5 Pro 6% UVB (if added) ❑ Feeder mice/rats ❑ Exo Terra digital Thermometer, hydrometer or combometer |
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**Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*