

## Children's, Stimson's, Spotted, Pygmy python care

*Antaresia* is a genus that includes a few species of relatively small non-venomous pythons native to Australia. They are generally quite gentle snakes, but some may be a little irritable. With appropriate care, they can live a healthy life for more than 20 years.

### Enclosure

- Enclosure size varies with size of the python; at a minimum, the enclosure should be 0.8 long x 0.4m high x 0.5m wide
- Enclosure should be constructed of materials that retain heat and are easy to clean. All glass enclosure may not retain heat well as glass is a poor insulator.
- Be mindful of the python's ability to squeeze through small spaces and escape! DO NOT use sticky tape or duct tape to reinforce the enclosure. Pythons have a tendency to get stuck, inflicting serious skin injuries to themselves in the process.
- There are many substrate options, all having pros and cons. Newspaper or paper towels are an easy to clean substrate. These pythons like to burrow, so providing opportunities for burrowing, such as recycled paper litter is, should be available.
- Clean the enclosure once weekly and spot clean as required
- Provide climbing and hiding furniture (branches, rocks, hide box) for enrichment, activity and improved thermoregulation
- Provide a water bowl large enough for the python to bathe in
- The humidity requirements depend on the species

### Temperature

- Monitor the temperature with at least 2 digital thermometers placed at the level of the python. The preferred temperature depends on the species.
- Basking spot: 32-35C provided with a thermostatically-controlled globe
- Cool end: 24C (to allow your python to thermoregulate)
- Night temp: 21C and above. Use a heat mat underneath the enclosure if required. Do not use hot rocks

### Lighting

- Recommended light cycle is 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness
- Although nocturnal, a UV light should be provided for pythons for general well-being and to allow normal behaviours to occur. UV globes should be positioned within a distance recommended by the manufacturer from the basking spot (usually ~30cm), and not filtered by glass. Replace the globe at least every 6 months (even if the globe still appears to be working).
- No artificial UV globe is a replacement for natural sunshine. Provide your python with regular access to natural unfiltered sunshine. Make sure shade is provided to prevent overheating.

### Diet

- Pythons are completely carnivorous
- Suitable food items are rodents or birds. Food items must be dead; it is illegal and inhumane to feed live prey.
- Juveniles eat once a week, adults eat every 2-3 weeks. Feed 10% body weight.
- The food items can be occasionally supplemented with a multivitamin

### Handling

- Avoid overhandling as this can be stressful
- Avoid handling your python after a meal or during shedding
- When handling your python, support its whole body to prevent injury

### Health care

- Newly acquired pythons should be quarantined and examined by a vet, which may include parasite testing and blood tests. Annual check-ups are recommended thereafter, especially if they are used for breeding
- Weigh your python regularly and record the weight
- Wash your hands after handling your python and between handling of different reptiles