

Woma, black-headed python care

Aspidites is a genus that includes two species of non-venomous pythons native to Australia. They are unique amongst pythons as they lack the heat-sensitive pits between their labial scales. 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 1m long x 1m high x 0.5m wide
- Enclosure should be constructed of materials that retain heat and are easy to clean (plastic/acrylic and wood). Glass enclosures are not ideal as they do not retain heat well.
- Newspaper or paper towels are the most hygienic and easy to clean substrates, and this limits any sand ingestion. These pythons are terrestrial and like to burrow, so providing recycled paper-based kitty litter is also suitable.
- Provide hiding (hide box, rocks) and climbing (branches) furniture for enrichment, activity and improved thermoregulation.
- Clean the enclosure once weekly and spot clean as required
- 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.
- Basking spot: 32-37C provided with a thermostatically-controlled globe
- Cool end: 24-27C
- 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 placed in the same position as the heat lamp, within a distance recommended by the manufacturer, 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