



Care Sheet



Python Regius - Ball Python, Royal Python

The ball python is native to west sub saharan Africa just north of the equator. From the western coast to central in a wide strip of territory including Senegal, to Nigeria through Cameroon, Chad, and the Central African Republic to Sudan and Uganda. They are found in grasslands and sparsely forested areas with cover. Typically near water where they can cool off in the heat (at night). They spend most of their time in underground, in hollow logs, abandoned termite mounds or animal burrows, active at dawn and dusk to hunt. It is threatened across much of its natural range due to collection for food, leather and the pet trade. The average adult is 4-5 feet and 1500-2200 grams in weight. Their common name is due to their tendency to curl into a ball when threatened.

Housing: Ball Pythons are ground dwelling snakes, so length of an enclosure is going to be more important than height. These are larger heavy bodied snakes that will climb if given the opportunity but do not climb well and could injure themselves should they fall from a significant height. Many keepers utilize rack systems to maintain their snakes and some use terrariums or PVC enclosures. We recommend a size that your snake as an adult can lay out down two sides. Baby pythons can utilize smaller enclosures until they are eating well. The most important thing about housing is making sure the proper temperature gradient and humidity is provided.

Heating: A hot spot (through belly heat, ceramic heat emitter or radiant heat panel) should be between 88-91F degrees. All heat sources need to be controlled by a thermostat to maintain accurate temperatures. The temperature probe for the thermometer needs to be accurately placed depending on which you are providing (on the surface for a basking spot, under the substrate for a burrow, on the side of the enclosure for ambient temperature). Ambient temperature gradient through the enclosure should range from 78F on the cool side & 85F on the hot side. **Lighting:** These snakes being nocturnal need no UVA/UVB provided.

Substrate: Many different substrates are available from newspaper, butcher paper, paper towels to cypress mulch, coco block mulch or orchid bark. Your choice of substrate can help in maintaining proper humidity. Aspen substrate has a tendency to mold in higher humidity but can be used successfully in more humid climates where the humidity is naturally high. Don't use pine/cedar because of the oils and don't use finely textured soil as it can get in their heat pits. Humidity should be kept in a range of 60-70%, on the higher side when it is in shed. 55% is the bare minimum needed to keep them from dehydration.

Food: Feed your baby ball weekly an appropriately sized meal (the thickest part of the snake) for the first year. As your snake grows up, you can spread out your meals to every other week to three weeks (depending on the size of the snake and the meal provided). Don't worry too much if they occasionally skip a meal. They also aren't too likely to eat during their shed cycle.

Water: Always provide a clean water dish in the enclosure. The water dish should be large enough for the python to occasionally soak themselves.

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