



Royal Python Care Sheet

Background

- Python Regius
- Native to regions of Western and central Africa
- males typically grow 109-131 cm (3.6-4.3') long, while females grow to be 114-136 cm (3.8-4.5') long
- Life expectancy up to 15-30 years in captivity
- Crepuscular – most active at night
- Solitary animals except during mating

Housing

- Vivarium's are ideal to maintain temperature and humidity
- Minimum guidelines suggest the length and width of the vivarium should be equal to the length of the snake fully stretched out.
 - The larger the enclosure the better
 - **Hatchlings up to 300g** can be housed in a tub measuring approximately 50 x 28 x 33cm (20" x 11" x 13").
 - **Juveniles under 3' long** can be housed in a 90 x 45 x 45cm (36" x 18" x 18") or larger. They can also be housed in a long-term "adult" enclosure as long as sufficient cover and places to hide are provided
 - **Subadults and adults over 3' long** do best in a 120 x 60 x 60cm (48" x 24" x 24") or larger. If you choose alternative dimensions, make sure there's about 8 sq ft (0.74m) of floor area and at least 2ft of vertical space for climbing — preferably more, especially for males.
- Substrates:
 - Bioactive enclosures
 - Cypress mulch/coco coir/top soil
 - Newspaper (as quarantine/hospital bedding)
- Spot clean enclosure regularly
- Replace substrate every few months
- Provide multiple hides
 - Hot and cold ends
 - Large enough for snake to curl up
 - Fake/real plants can be used to provide cover and reduce stress
- Provide lots of climbing areas as well
 - Royal pythons used to be considered terrestrial but they are actually semi-arboreal so climbing space is enriching for them
- Humidity in the enclosure should be around 60-80%, this is based on the average humidity in their natural habitat in Africa
- Offering a humid hide as well can help with shedding

Lighting and Heating

- Lighting
 - Although they are crepuscular it is still recommended to provide light within the enclosure to mimic a normal day/night cycle
 - Provide a light source to simulate daytime hours can help with the mental health of your snake
 - Standard times are usually 12 hours on and 12 hours off
- UV lighting
 - UVA is visible to reptiles
 - UVB is required for healthy metabolism and synthesis of vitamin D3
 - UVB is essential to keep a reptile healthy in captivity, UVA isn't medically necessary but can help with pets wellbeing
 - The length of time of which visible light is received in a day is referred to as "photoperiod" – incorrect photoperiods have been shown to cause reproductive disease, obesity and dietary problems
 - If a reptile is being supplemented with dietary calcium but no UVB light then it will be unable to absorb this calcium and cannot use it
- Deciding what light to get

| Zone | Characteristics | UVI Zone range (all-day average) | Max UVI recorded (one-off maximum) | Species in original study | Species typical of Zone commonly held in captivity |
|------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Crepuscular or shade dweller | 0 - 0.7 | 0.6 - 1.4 | Cottonmouth water moccasin Texas rat snake Jamaican brown anole Broad-banded water snake | Leopard gecko Crested gecko Corn snake Burmese python |
| 2 | Partial sun or occasional basker | 0.7 - 1.0 | * 1.1 - 3.0 | Western ribbon snake Green anole Jamaican blue-pants anole Yellow-bellied water snake | Redfooted tortoise Monkey-tailed skink Chinese water dragon Boa constrictor |
| 3 | Open or partial sun basker | 1.0 - 2.6 | 2.9 - 7.4 | Desert side-blotched lizard Eastern fence lizard Cuban brown anole Texas spiny lizard | Bearded dragon Spur-thighed tortoise Red-eared slider Day gecko |
| 4 | 'Mid-day' open sun baskers | 2.6 - 3.5 | 4.6 - 9.5 | Lesser Earless Lizard Sagebrush Lizard Northern Prairie Lizard | Uromastyx Chuckwalla Rhinoceros iguana (NB: shade is vital even for these) |

UV-Tool 'Shade method'

UV-Tool 'Sunbeam method'

* Zone 2 reptiles in a larger enclosure would probably utilise gentle "sunbeam" UVB up to approx. UVI 3.0

- Royal pythons fit in to Ferguson Zone 2
- This means the ideal UVB lamps are 5-10% tubular bulbs used with a reflector
- Ideal temperatures:
 - Basking 35-40°C (95-104°F)
 - Ambient day temperature 28-30°C (82.4-86°F)
 - Ambient night temperature 24-26°C (75.2-78.8°F)
- Heat can be provided by multiple methods and all should be used with a thermostat
 - Heat mats
 - Basking bulb
 - Ceramic heat emitter
- Heat mats can struggle to penetrate through the bedding
- Wattage of lamp is based on size of enclosure and the power needed to heat to the appropriate temperatures

Diet

- Usually fed on rodents
- Ideal size is the same width as 1.5x the size of the snakes head
- Hatchlings should be fed pinkies every 7 days
- Adult snakes will need rats/guinea pigs/small rabbits
- Chicks and quail eggs can be used to add variety to diet but should not be relied on for 100% of the diet
- DO NOT FEED LIVE FOOD
- Avoid handling for 48 hours after feeding
- Watch for weight gain, obesity is a common problem in pet snakes
- Can also dust prey items with calcium or D3 powder to help fill in any gaps in the diet

General Care Tips

- Monitor snakes weight and when it sheds its skin
- Should shed their skin in one go
- Handle with care when snake is in blue (about to shed) they are more likely to bite during this time
- Increased humidity in the vivarium or a humid hide can help with shedding