

Ball Python / Royal Python

Scientific Name: Python Regius

Brief Description:

The Ball Python is one of the most commonly kept snakes in North America. Originally found in Africa, this is a non-venomous constrictor which is small in size with docile temperament. They are carnivorous animals and more most active at dusk, while hunting for their prey on the ground or in trees.



Average Size: The average length is four-to-six feet, with a large girth.

Average Life Span: Five to thirty years.

Feeding:

For the new Ball Python keeper, we offer the following feeding suggestions and recommendations:

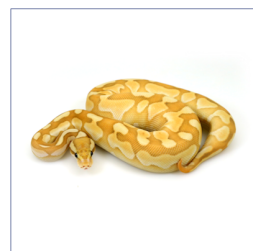
- One appropriately sized rodent, per week, no larger than your pet snake largest point.
- Can be fed "rat pups" or "crawlers" from a young age.
- Can be converted to feeding on frozen, thawed or pre-killed rodents.
- Should not be handled for one day after feeding.
- Do not leave LIVE RODENTS unattended with ANY snake.
- It's common for snakes to go on hunger strikes, especially in the winter
 - o Reduce handling at this time.
 - o Continue to monitor health.
 - o Offer food every ten-to-fourteen days, until eating again.

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Housing:

Many types of enclosures are available for your Ball Python and Petware House is pleased to carry a number of such enclosures, such as:



- Plastic Rubbermaid sweater boxes.
- Melamine racks
- Freedom breeder cages.
- Glass aquarium tanks.
- Enclosure will require a thermal gradient.

Temperatures and Heating:

Providing the correct enclosure temperature is absolutely critical to maintaining a happy and healthy Ball Python. Petware House is pleased to offer everything you need, under one roof, in addition to the following guidelines for enclosure temperature and heating:

- Provide a basking spot of 88 to 92°F.
- Provide an ambient temperature of 78-80°F, ensuring not to drop below 75°F.
- Do not guess temperatures! Place a thermometer at each end of the enclosure.
- Use heating pads, ceramic heat emitters, basking bulbs to produce heat.
- On a regular basis, monitor humidity levels.
- Do not use hot rocks as they distribute heat unevenly.

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Humidity:

Too much humidity and too little humidity are detrimental to health and well being of your Ball Python. For optimal comfort and health, we should aim for a fifty-to-sixty percent humidity rate. Here are several tips and suggestion for achieving this humidity level:



- Use cypress mulch or similar substrate that can be misted and is mould-resistant.
 - o Cypress mulch provides visual cues when dry: tan in color (mist accordingly).
 - o Cypress mulch provides visual cues when wet: rich brown (do not mist).
- Be sure to keep the enclosure HUMID, not SOGGY.
- If you have a screen-top enclosure, cover it with plastic or towel, leaving a small crevasse.

Lighting:

We highly recommend a good quality UVB light bulb for lighting in addition to having it run on a 12/12 cycle, meaning 12 hours on and 12 hours off. Continuous bright, overhead lighting is stressful to snakes, especially for a nocturnal serpent such as this one.

Maintenance:

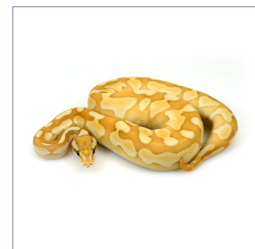
- Remove uneaten prey and feces as soon as possible.
- Spot-clean enclosure, regularly.
- Clean and disinfect water bowl on a weekly basis.
- Every thirty days, remove substrate and clean enclosure with a reptile-safe cleaner.

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Accessories:

The one cage accessory that is beneficial to a happy python is a good hide box, perhaps even a couple of them. These are secretive snakes that appreciate and utilize a hide spots. Provide one on each end of your snake's enclosure so that it doesn't have to choose between temperature & security. Commercially available hide boxes work quite well.



Reproductive:

- Sexual maturity anywhere from eighteen months to four years of age
- Breeding time frame, in captivity, from November to March
- To help induce breeding:
 - o Reduce daytime light to eight-to-ten hours.
 - o Drop night-time temperature into the mid seventies.
 - o Female should be introduced into the males cage.
 - o Mist Ball Pythons with water to help induce breeding.
- Females shed fifteen-to-twenty days after ovulation.
- Eggs are laid within thirty days of post-ovulation.
- Typically lays four to fifty eggs.
- Incubation temperature of eighty-eight to ninety degrees Fahrenheit.

Notes and Comments:

Pythons are often regarded as the most popular pet python in herpetoculture, and with their docile nature & low maintenance requirements it is easy to see why. Acquiring captive bred specimens will help ensure a successful snake keeping experience. The myriad color morphs that are now available, combined with the fact that normal ball pythons are quite attractive in their own right, truly make this species a snake for both novice and advanced herpetoculturist alike.