



Royal Python

Ball Python

Python Regius

Royal pythons are a great choice of snake to have as a pet and are very popular because of their great temperaments, size and colour. It is very important to know that royal pythons aren't always the best feeders this is because of their shy and good nature. When choosing a royal python we would always recommend going for one that someone can provide a feeding chart with.

Description:

Royal pythons are nocturnal snakes (awake at night) that come from western Africa they are Africa's smallest python with males only reaching 3.5-4ft and females reaching 4.5-5ft. They are a heavy bodied snake making them a great size to handle. Their colours range from golden yellows to light brown and black. Now due to commercial breeding royal pythons can range from many different colours. Males and females will live happily in mixed or same sex groups.

Housing

When choosing what size vivarium to have for your royal the first thing to do is decide on the size of the snake, this is very important because you can't put a baby snake into a big 4ftx2ftx2ft vivarium because snakes are agoraphobic and don't like big open space. If you decide to buy a baby there are two ways of going about the housing

1. You can buy a small vivarium and upgrade it as the snake grows
2. You can buy a larger 3x2x2/4x2x2 and keep the snake in a tub with lots of hides

If you are going for an older royal then a 3x2x2ft or a 4x2x2ft vivarium will be fine. Being from West Africa royal pythons like warmer temperatures.

Heating and Lighting:

Your vivarium should have a hot end and a cooler end this is because your royal python is cold blooded like all reptiles and needs to regulate its body temperature by moving from one end to the other. You will need to place your heat sources at one end of your vivarium to achieve this. The heating should be provided from above via a spot bulb normally a 100w and a 150w ceramic heater (ALWAYS put a guard around your bulb and ceramic heater as they get extremely hot and can cause serious burns). The spot bulb should be kept on a timer to help stimulate a 12 hour day. If you're using a ceramic bulb you will need to plug it into a thermostat we recommend using a Habistat as this is one of the best brands on the market. Place the probe at the cool end of the vivarium and set to 80F.

Royal pythons come from western Africa so require temperatures reaching highs of 90F at the hot end and 80F at the cooler end during the day and dropping down to 75F overnight (your ceramic heater will maintain the night time temperatures). Please remember **DO NOT** place the vivarium directly in front of a window or next to a radiator as the unfiltered sunlight/extra heat being projected through the glass will raise the temperatures significantly and could be fatal.

Substrate and Décor:

Ok so you for the substrate you can use beach chip or dark bark chipping mixed with beach chips.

Be careful when using a dark substrate like dark bark chippings as they will make the vivarium too humid and could cause little sores.

As royal python are nocturnal (awake during the night and asleep day at night) they like lots of places to hide so it's good to give them plenty of rocks, cork bark and logs.

Using fake silk or plastic plants and vines helps give your royal python more coverage in the vivarium so it will feel safe remember snakes don't like big open spaces.

At night you will find your royal much more active and will explore the vivarium. If your royal has just eaten or is going through shed then he/she may hide.

Feeding:

The food size you feed your royal all depends on the size the snake is. The rule of feeding is the food should be as thick as the thickest part of the snake once you don't see a bump in the snake after feeding up the size.

Royal pythons as hatchlings and yearlings should be fed every 5 days and as they grow and reach adulthood they should be fed every 7-10 days. Hatchlings will start off on rat pups normally and move up through different size mice and rats, when they become adults they should be on medium rats.

When feeding your royal python don't handle it the day of the feed or the day after you have fed them. Handling the day of the feed could put the snake off feeding and handling the day after could result in the royal regurgitating the food as it needs a day to digest.

Don't feed your royal if it's coming into shed.

Shedding:

Shedding is a very stressful time for a snake and should be left alone until its shed. As a baby your royal will shed quite often every couple of weeks because its growing. As it gets bigger you will find the shed become longer apart.

Signs of a shedding royal

- The colours of your royal will darken and dull up.
- Then you will notice their eyes will cloud over and go blue in colour for a few days.
- The eyes will clear again, but the colours will still be dull, the royal will shed after a day or two.

Once your royal has shed look for the head part and make sure both eye caps came off. Then check the royal to make sure it has all come off, if it hasn't pop it in a warm bath and let him soak.

