



Jungle Bob's Care Sheet

BALL PYTHONS

(*Python regius*)

General Information

The Ball Python is perfect for folks seeking a “big snake in a medium package”. Generally calm, and often willing to breed, it is among the hardiest of all constrictors.

The Ball Python inhabits Sub-Saharan Africa, from Senegal to Sudan and the Central African Republic. They are found in arid savannahs, open woodlands, overgrown fields, farm outskirts and similar habitats.

Adults are thick in build and average 3-5 feet in length, with rare specimens approaching 7 feet. The body is brown to nearly black in color, and marked with blotches of tan, reddish-brown or yellow-orange. An unbelievable array of color morphs has been produced by breeders.



Housing

Hatchlings fare well in 10 gallon aquariums, while adults (depending upon their size) can be kept in 20-75 gallon tanks. The screen top should be secured with clips or locks as they are amazingly strong, even by snake standards. Ball pythons may be kept on [aspen, cypress mulch, pine bark or terrarium liners](#), with a [reptile cave for shelter](#).

Temperatures should range from 80-85 F, with a basking site of 90-92 F and a dip to 77 F at night. Provide your pet with the largest home possible, so that a thermal gradient (areas of different temperatures that allow the snake to regulate its metabolism) can be established. You can reach the desired temperatures with

[Jungle Bob's Basking](#) and [Night Spot Bulbs](#). Reptile Heat Pads are also useful for creating basking sites, and as a night-time heat source. A great way to determine if your terrarium is at the correct temperature is to use the [Zoo Med Digital Terrarium Thermometer](#).

Humidity should be maintained between 50-60% and this can be accomplished by periodically misting the enclosure. If your snake is having difficulty shedding or shedding in pieces, provide a cave filled with damp [sphagnum moss](#).

Diet

Ball Pythons can be picky feeders at times, but most accept mice or rats. Particularly stubborn individuals may be tempted by gerbils or rat pups. New owners are often dismayed by the Ball Python's habit of fasting for long periods of time, but this seems related to circadian rhythms (an "internal clock" of sorts), and is rarely a serious concern.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or uneaten food should be removed daily. A [Reptile Scoop](#) will simplify this task. The substrate should be completely changed once each month. The inside of the terrarium can be scrubbed with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner; we recommend [Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat](#).

Ball Pythons tolerate gentle handling well, but like all reptiles they can bite when threatened; the snake's head should not be allowed near one's face. Always wash your hands before and after handling any animal. The defense strategy of coiling into a ball should not be induced, as this indicates a high level of stress.

Fun Fact

A Ball Python formerly in the Philadelphia Zoo's collection holds the captive snake longevity record. Acquired at an undetermined age, it lived for 48 years!

Jungle Bob's Reptile World

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www.JungleBobsReptileWorld.com

Maps courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries.