

CARPET PYTHON

(*Morelia Spilota*)

Carpet pythons are a popular reptile companion in Australia. They are non-venomous and typically docile and known for their bright, vivid patterns and colours. While carpet pythons have specific care and maintenance requirements, with the right care, they are a hardy snake that is relatively easy to care for.

FOOD

Carpet pythons are predators, feasting on a varied diet of many different animals in the wild. Typically, a baby carpet python should be fed once a week, while a fully grown carpet python can be fed once every two to threeweeks. A grown carpet python diet will ideally consist of mice, rats, quails or rabbits. These can be typically bought frozen but must be completely thawed and warmed prior to feeding. Frozen feeders are much safer for your reptiles than live, as any possibility of rodent bites are eliminated. To keep track of your python's feeding schedule, make a record of when he eats and what he eats. A grown python should be fed jumbo rats (or similar) once every two to three weeks. Young pythons fed exclusively with mice may become fussy and refuse to eat alternatives. While this is not a problem when they are young, an adult python will need to eat 10 (or more!) mice to sustain him. You can thaw a smaller rat in a bag with a mouse and a small amount of water, "mouse-scenting" the rat for your python to adjust his diet.

PYTHON CHECKLIST

- Habitat
- Heat Source(s)
- Light
- Substrate
- Hiding Place
- Climbing Place
- Thermometer
- Python Food

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HABITAT

If your python is an adult, 120 x 60 x 60cm is considered the minimum carpet python enclosure size to keep your new friend comfortable.

If your carpet python is only a new hatchling, he will be quite small (up to 36cm long) and can be kept in a smaller habitat until he has grown enough to readily accept food. A snake tank height of 40cm is considered the minimum to allow for climbing.

The snake habitat will need to contain everything your carpet python needs to be comfortable - something to climb on, a hiding spot, a water bowl, a heat source and a suitable substrate.

Your carpet python will need a place to climb to get up high and perch on. You can also provide a log for him to bask on. This can be done with some clever arranging of your tank decorations if you have limited space.

You will also need to provide a hiding place for your carpet python. While this is especially important for young pythons, even adult pythons will appreciate and use a hiding spot when they want to feel safe and secure. During low temperatures, your python may also use her hiding spot as a place to feel warmer.

The habitat's heat source should be kept at one end, allowing your python to keep control of his body temperature as necessary by moving closer or further away. Be sure to keep a thermometer handy to monitor the habitat temperature.



TEMPERATURE

Your python's habitat should have both a warm and a cool side, with a basking spot about 32°C. The cool spot of the habitat should be kept between 24°C during the day and generally, the temperature should never drop below 20°C, even at night.

You will need to check the habitat temperature every day and use heat sources and UV lighting to keep your temperature above 22°C at all times.

LIGHTING

You will need to provide a day and night cycle for your carpet python. Your UV lights and heat lamps can provide this by running 10-12 hours per day. He may also benefit from short periods of exposure to natural light, outdoors.

For adequate artificial lighting, a UVB globe with a minimum rating of 5.0 should be used. Your bulbs should be changed every 6 months, as they lose their strength over time.

ACCESSORIES

The water bowl you provide for your python will need to be chosen carefully, so that it can't be accidentally tipped over. A heavy bowl is ideal for this should be kept in the opposite end of the habitat to your heat source.

In addition to a water dish, hiding spot and climbing perch, your carpet python tank will also need substrate.

While your chosen substrate can be as simple as newspaper or paper towels, you must take care to remove any damp substrate as soon as possible to avoid potential skin infections. A wood or pulp substrate is more absorbent and will also lend your habitat an earthy, natural look.

You should check your substrate and habitat daily, removing any waste, skin or uneaten food. A full substrate change should also be carried out every 6 weeks.

Your python will appreciate room to climb