

Royal Python



FACT SHEET

Pictured Snake : **Royal Python**

Genus : **Python**

Specie : **Python Regius**

Class : **Reptile**

Adult Weight : **up to 5kg**

Adult Size : **1.5 - 2m males are smaller**

The average life expectancy : **20- 30 Years**

Social Structure : **Solitary reptile**

Enclosure : **Vivarium**

Temperature : **26c in cold side of habitat and 32 in hot end of habitat**

Feeding Young 0 - 12 Months : **every 5 - 7 days**

Feeding 12 months + : **every 8 - 14 days**

Drinking : **will drink from a water bowl and bathe in it**

Breeding Female age and weight : **minimum of 3yr old and at least 1400g**

Breeding Male age and weight : **when able to produce sperm**

Breeding Season : **First day of December**

Gestation Period : **44 Days**

Live Birth or Eggs : **Eggs**

Time to Hatch / incubation period : **50 - 60 Days**

HANDLING

Always before and after handling clean your hands with an antibacterial wash/solution as pythons mouth has bacteria such as salmonella which can transfer to people known as zoonosis. When handling a Royal Python remember it can strike at anytime, there are many ways to approach and pick up the python. The 2 most popular and well known are the flat palm and the hook.

Flat Palm : When about to pick up the snake face on. Have your hand perfectly flat face down towards the head and go forward. if the python strikes there is less chance of it being able to latch on, If you lightly press to the head it recoils and you can the safely pick up the python.

Hook : Using a hook you can simply place the hook between a coil, or half way down the body, make sure your hook is capable of taking the snakes weight. also remember for full control as you lift you need to hold the pythons tail so you can direct the head away from yourself or another person.

Over time can become very tame but always be prepared for the reptile to strike, use protective equipment when required.

SEXING YOUR ROYAL PYTHON

The most accurate way to sex a Royal python is called popping and probing.

Here is a link to a video on Youtube from Reptile Rapture showing the correct way to do so, This should only be done by a vet or an expert, done incorrectly could seriously injure the snake, when probing you could rupture the inside. when popping you could press to hard or incorrectly braking the snakes spine or damaging the hemipenes

MALE : Will have hemipenes

FEMALE : Will not have hemipenes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmKizCyG4kE>

FEEDING IT IS ILLEGAL TO LIVE FEED IN THE UK

Pythons are Carnivores. Their diet is Meat based for proteins. They eat: Rats, Mice, Multimammates & Chicks. if you feed it chicks remove the wings, beak, and claws/nails as this can hurt or damage the python when eating.

They eat every 7 - 14 days and can go longer as they store fat reserves to live from for when they go off there food in breeding season, during this time it is not unheard of for snakes to not eat for 4-8 Months and sometimes longer. A Royal Python can eat pray the same width as the widest part of its body.

To defrost a meal you can leave exposed in the open for 12 hours or longer until thawed. or place in warm water until thawed. do not put in a microwave it will explode or boiling water or an oven do not refreeze if it does not eat. Dispose of as it has started a decomposing process.

HOUSING & HUSBANDRY

VIVARIUM : A wooden vivarium is better than glass as it keeps heat in better. Do not place the vivarium in direct sunlight or in an area where there is lots of traffic as this can agitate the python. place it somewhere calm and undeterred and excluded from drafts.

When buying a vivarium you need to make sure that you make a balanced habitat. if you use a large vivarium include lots of foliage a small snake in a large tank can become unpredictable. The snake will patrol for an intruder if the tank is too large. when you put your hand in you could get bitten. Start with a smaller tank so the snake feels secure and it balls up and does not have a body in the 'S' strike position then it feels secure and you get out and handle your snake. the Vivarium needs more width than height Start with a 18 - 24" long vivarium for a youngster and upgrade to a 36" long or larger as the snake grows to the length of the vivarium.

SUBSTRATE : The substrate used in the vivarium should preferably be reptile aspen, reptile sand or news paper. **DO NOT USE** substrates containing **CEDAR** as it is toxic to Royal Pythons

HEATING : A vivarium needs to have a hot end of (32c) and a cold end (26c) this is so it will move around to regulate its temperature with a hide at both ends and water preferably in the middle this will provide a hiding spot at both ends and the water in the middle with ventilation to create and provide humidity (55-60%) also required by the python. The temperature is to be controlled by a stat, There are different types of stats for different heating equipment. Ceramics, heat mat, heat coils & basking heat bulbs.

Some stats have a time function this can allow you to program night time temperatures which are 4-5c cooler than daytime temperatures. otherwise the stat will have temperature dial which you can change manually and should be checked daily. If too high the glass will have water humidity at all times which is bad for the python and can case respiratory issues. Ventilation is a must also to stop high humidity levels

LIGHTING :

if you have this on a timer you can also set your day and night time for your UV bulb or spotlight bulb to simulate day and night on a period of 12 hours on and 12 hours off although it is not required to help digest its food. Excessive lighting can upset your royal python as they are a nocturnal reptile.

HEALTH CHECK

Always check your Royal Python as much as possible to ensure a healthy companion, here is a list of checks to do to maintain a health animal.

Eyes : make sure they are clear except when shedding and have no unshed eye caps after shedding.

Nose : Make sure there is no shed blocking nostrils and listen for clean breathing with no crackling sounds.

Mouth : Make sure the jaw is aligned and if experienced open the mouth to make sure all is bright pink and no abyss or saliva dripping from the mouth.

Body/scales : Make sure there is no excess shed this can be caused by incorrect humidity. No exposed lumps. run your fingers down its ribs to make sure there is no broken ribs

Anus & Genitals : Check for discharge and inflammation also check to make sure the vent is clear and if male make sure the hemipenes are not permanently exposed

Cleaning

Water: Every day water should be changed and the bowl cleaned, as the python likes to bathe in its water bowl and may defecate in it.

Bedding: should be changed as and when required as again it may dedicate and urinate and this can give off a nasty odour.

Cleaning: always make sure you use reptile friendly chemicals if required. like "Repti-clean" or an anti-bacterial detergent that is reptile safe

Requirements & Equipment when purchasing

Vivarium + correct size for python, Heating controller, Heating Source for day and night if required. water bowl. UV light and controller, Decor - Vines, plants & hides, A care booklet with this relevant information.

Owning a Royal Python

You do not need a licence to purchase a royal python, You do have to be 18 to purchase any animal in the UK. Law states under the animal welfare act 2006 that it is your duty to care for your animal in all circumstances. Provide the animal with correct living conditions and accommodation & to provide fresh food and waters and when required. If the reptile were to become ill or injured it is your responsibility to seek veterinary / expert help to assure that the Reptile will recover.

One of the leading Reptile vets in the UK is called John Chitty and he can be contacted VIA the link <http://antonvets.co.uk/exotics/189-2/>

Many species of reptiles are also covered under various European and international laws, such as the Berne Convention and CITES regulations which are designed to protect endangered animals and prohibit trade in wild-caught specimens. A Royal python is not under this Law

Disease / Disorder	Cause	Visual Signs / Symptoms	Treatment / Prevention
Mouth rot infectious stomatitis	When debris or food gets stuck in the mouth	Bright red spots or spots on the snake's gums, excessive salivation. May refuse food	Seek Veterinary advice
Mites	A parasite, contracted from other infected pythons or bedding substrates	Look like white, black, or red dots & hide in the grooves between snake scales on the underside of a ball python's jaws	There are commercially available products specifically developed for mite removal like anit-Mite spray. follow instructions on the can.
Respiratory Infections	keeping their environment too cold or at another improper temperature	Sitting and holding its head up, open mouth breathing, and making loud gurgling noises while breathing and oozing mucus from its mouth.	Seek veterinary assistance
Shedding Complications	A snake should shed all in one not in patches	Incorrect temperature and humidity levels	Adjust accordingly or add foliage to rub against. if the caps do not come off after a couple of sheds seek expert or veterinary advice
IBD - Inclusion Body Disease	Bitten by Infected Mite or born with the disease	Star gazing, tying in knots, paralysis, body muscle break down, loss of appetite, can take 45 - 90 days to display signs once infected by a mite, or when born with the disease, will not display until reaches sexual maturity	Seek veterinary assistance immediately. There is no cure and death is within days of symptoms being displayed.