



## Children's, Spotted, and Anthill/Stimson's Pythons *Genus Antaresia*

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- Childrens Python (*Antaresia childreni*), Spotted Python (*Antaresia maculosa*), Anthill/Stimson's Python (*Antaresia stimsoni*).
- Ground color ranges from olive brown, light to dark brown, tan, or yellowish brown with 1 to 3 rows of darker oval or saddle shaped spots and/or blotches.
- These species range from western, northern to northeastern Australia.
- If provided the proper care, these pygmy pythons can attain longevity of 15-20 years or more.

### **Size**

Ranges from 5-8 inches as hatchlings, and 2-5 feet (24-54 inches) depending on the species.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchlings can be housed in a 10-15 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adults should be housed in a minimum of a 20-30 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. These snakes will thrive on a substrate of newspaper, cage liner material, aspen or Sani Chip shavings, or cypress mulch. Do not use pine or cedar shavings, as these substrates are toxic to snakes. Provide a water bowl or dish and a hide box at all times in the enclosure. Artificial foliage, driftwood, and other cage furnishings can provide additional security.

Create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Overhead, incandescent lighting can also be used, but is not required for these pythons (which are primarily nocturnal). Ideal temperatures for these species range from 75-80 degrees F on the cool side and 85-90 degrees F on the warm side.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least once per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

### **Feeding/Diet**

In the wild, these pythons will prey upon rodents and other small mammals, small birds and bird eggs, and small lizards and other reptiles.

Hatchling *Antaresia* sp. are known to be choosy feeders, often preferring lizards or frogs initially. Most hatchlings can be switched over to pinkie or fuzzie mice every 3-5 days however. Food items can gradually be increased as needed. Most adult *Antaresia* sp. can be fed adult mice to small adult rats once every 5-7 days. A general rule of thumb to follow when feeding snakes is to provide prey items that are approximately the same width as the widest point of the snake.

### **Handling**

As with many snakes, hatchling and juvenile *Antaresia* sp. tend to initially be nervous and defensive. They may musk or defecate, or bite when alarmed. Handle them gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. Most adult *Antaresia* sp. will become more tolerant and accustomed to handling as they become older, although some can remain somewhat nippy and unpredictable.

**\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\***