



Blood and Short Tailed Pythons

- Three species, all with similar care requirements. **Borneo Short tailed Python** (*Python breitensteini*), **Sumatran Black Blood Python** (*Python curtus*), and **Red Blood Python** (*Python brongersmai*).
- These pythons occur in southern to South East Asia.
- A medium sized, VERY heavy bodied snake with a large, wedge shaped head. Background color is usually red to reddish brown or brown with yellowish or cream colored blotches or often a broken dorsal stripe. Large, lighter colored irregular “alien head” shaped blotches characterize the sides.
- If provided the proper care, these pythons can attain longevity of 20-25 years or more.

Size

Ranges from 8-12 inches as hatchlings, and 4-6 feet (48-72 inches) for most adults.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling blood pythons can be housed in a 10-15 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult blood pythons should be housed in a minimum of an enclosure measuring 4'X3'. Blood pythons 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 blood pythons (which are primarily nocturnal). Ideal temperatures for these pythons 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, blood pythons will prey upon rodents and other small mammals, and small birds.

Most hatchlings can be started off on hopper mice or fuzzy rats once per week. Food items can gradually be increased as needed. Most adults of these species can be fed medium to large adult rats once every 5-7 days. A general rule of thumb to follow when feeding snakes is to provide prey items that are no greater the width as the widest point of the snake.

Handling

As with many snakes, hatchling and juvenile blood pythons may initially be nervous and defensive. They may hiss and strike to what they perceive to be a threat. These snakes often respond well to gentle and deliberate handling, but do not drop or injure the animal. Blood pythons have held an undeserved reputation for being “nasty” and difficult to keep, but this is based mostly on wild caught and/or imported animals. Captive bred animals that are becoming increasingly well established in the industry can make for very personable and rewarding pythons to keep for the intermediate hobbyist.

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

