



Carpet Pythons *Morelia spilota*

- Carpet pythons are a slender bodied semi arboreal (tree dwelling) python with a brown, black, reddish, or olive black ground color and an intricate patterning of creams, tans, yellows, golds, or light brown depending on species.
- Carpet pythons are so named for their patterning, which is said to resemble Oriental carpets.
- Depending on species, carpet pythons are native to Australia, Indonesia, or Papa New Guinea.
- If provided the proper care, carpet pythons can attain longevity of 20-25 years or more.

Size

Ranges from 10-15 inches as hatchlings, and 4 ½ to 9 feet (54-108”) as adults depending on the species. Consider the potential adult size of a carpet python prior to obtaining one.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling carpet pythons can be housed in a 15-20 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult carpet pythons should be housed in a minimum of a 55 gallon long terrarium or similar sized 36-48” plastic enclosure. Carpet 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, wooden or plastic dowels, and other cage furnishings can provide additional security. Carpet pythons are semi arboreal; provide opportunities for them to climb or perch.

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 carpet pythons (which are primarily nocturnal). Ideal temperatures for carpet pythons range from 75-80 degrees F on the cool side and 86-92 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, carpet pythons will prey upon rodents and other small mammals, and small birds.

As hatchlings, carpet pythons can be started off on hopper mice or fuzzy rats every 3-5 days. Some carpet pythons may become imprinted on and prefer mice over rats. Food items can gradually be increased as needed. Most adult carpet pythons can be fed small 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 approximately the same width as the widest point of the snake.

Handling

As with many snakes, hatchling and juvenile carpet pythons are often initially more nervous and nippy. Handle your carpet python gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. Most carpet pythons will settle down considerably, but are active and inquisitive snakes as they become older, although some may remain somewhat nippy.

****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****