CARPET AND DIAMOND PYTHON CARE

Diamond & Carpet Pythons are non-poisonous snakes native to Australia. They belong to the species Morelia spilota. There are many subspecies including the Diamond Python *M. spilota*, Coastal Carpet Python *M. mcdowelli*, Centralian Carpet Python *M. s. bredlil*, Inland Carpet Python *M. s. metcalfi* and Jungle Carpet Python *M. s. cheynei*. There are also interbreeds of these subspecies. They are generally relatively easy & low maintenance reptiles to keep in captivity. They are gentle creatures though some individuals may be more temperamental. Some pythons may grow over 3m in length & live for over 30 years. Below outlines some 'basic' requirements for keeping Pythons as pets.

**Please note:** All Australian snakes are protected species in Australia. Seek individual state & territory requirements for legalities on keeping snakes as pets.

**Housing**
- Pythons can be housed indoors. They require suitable artificial heat & light sources as outlined below
- **Suitable enclosures** include ventilated glass/clear plastic fronted wooden or plastic cabinets at least 1m long x 1m high x 0.5m wide (depending on size of snake). Juveniles can be kept in smaller plastic tubs
- Furnish the cage with a hide box, branches for climbing & a water bowl heavy/large enough for the snake to bathe in
- **Substrates** (enclosure floor covering) are most simply & hygienically provided by means of newspaper sheets
- Enclosures should be disinfected at least once weekly (use household bleach diluted 1:10 with water & rinse well afterwards) & 'spot' cleaned as necessary
- Pythons can be housed individually or in pairs, but beware that fighting may occur. Avoid feeding them together
- Centralian Pythons come from arid areas & prefer a lower humidity. Conversely, Jungle Pythons prefer a higher humidity
- **Heating:** Provide them with a 'temperature gradient' in their enclosure. This means they need a 'hot' end & a 'cool' end. The temperatures must be monitored with thermometers at both of these ends
- The hot/basking area end can be heated with a thermostatically controlled ceramic/reflector globe to create a basking temp of 32-35C. At the cool end, aim for 24-27C. (nb; different subspecies require different temperatures)
- Overnight temperatures should not fall below 21C. The use of heat mats or red light/ceramic heat lamps may be required to achieve this 'night heat'. Do not use heat rocks, as serious burns to the python could result.
- **Lighting:** Even though nocturnal, Pythons may benefit from UVB light which may aid in natural foraging and feeding behaviours. The effective UVB emission lifespan of these lights is usually in the vicinity of 3-6 months, so they will need to be replaced at least every 6 months
- UVB light may not be essential to pythons, it's a good idea to give them regular access to natural unfiltered sunlight
- Recommended day and night cycles for most Python species is 12 hrs light and 12 hrs dark

**Handling**
- Most Pythons can become very used to being handled. Over handling though may be stressful
- **Support the whole body** of the snake & avoid squeezing them

**Feeding**
- Pythons are carnivorous. They should be fed whole prey such as rodents or birds. All items fed MUST be dead. It is illegal and inhumane to feed snakes live prey items.
- Occasional supplementation with multivitamins added to the food is a good idea
- Feed pythons around 10% of their body weight weekly for juveniles & every 2-3 weeks for adults

**Veterinary & Health Notes**
- Have any newly acquired python examined by a reptile vet. Parasite checks and general blood screens can be performed
- It is essential that you quarantine any newly acquired reptile. Don't risk introducing disease or parasites. Speak to your reptile vet for details on sound quarantine procedures
- It is recommended that you have your reptiles vet-checked annually. Especially if you intend to breed them
- Pythons can also be microchipped to aid in identification and ownership.
- Always wash your hands after handling any reptile & between handling of different reptiles
- It is a good idea to regularly weigh & record the body weight of your pythons
- Pythons can be transported individually in tied cotton bags & then placed into an insulated container. Ensure that they can't escape or overhear.

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