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CAGE REQUIREMENTS

When choosing a cage for your ball python, remember how big it will eventually become. Either a large cage should be selected, or the decision made to purchase larger cages as the animal grows. Young pythons may be kept in vivariums that measure (L)90cm x (W)40cm x (H)40cm. After they reach about 1 metre in size, a larger vivarium with a sliding glass/acrylic front may be more appropriate. Adult ball pythons should preferably be kept in a vivarium that is no smaller than (L)120cm x (W)45cm x (H)45cm. A general rule of thumb is that the perimeter of the cage (2 times the width plus 2 times the length) should be equal to at least 2 times the length of the snake.

Snakes are excellent escape artists, so any cage should have a tight-fitting lid or door, preferably one with a lock. The lid and/or other panels should allow for good ventilation. Cypress mulch, paper towels, and newspapers provide a good substrate, as does AstroTurf. Have one or two spare pieces available to use when the cage is being cleaned. Do NOT use wood shavings.

CAGE DECORATIONS

Your ball python must have a hiding place in its cage. It needs a place to where it can comfortably retreat, a place to hide during daylight hours, a place where it can feel safe and secure. Hides can be made from pretty much anything. Hollow logs, terra cotta flower pots or purpose made hides will all provide the necessary security, as long as they're big enough to house the snake in question and as long as they allow for easy access for both you and your pet.

An excellent hide is made from a wide terra cotta flower pot. Enlarge the drain hole with a chisel and file it to remove any sharp edges. Place the pot in the cage, drain hole side up. The snake will often spend most of the daylight hours inside the hide. Also, at least two hiding places should be provided at different ends of the tank, one should have a thermostat-controlled heating pad under it to allow the animal to regulate its temperature. Juveniles in particular may be stressed by overly large cages that do not have sufficient small hiding spaces.

WATER AND HUMIDITY

A fresh pool of water should be available so the snake can immerse itself when it chooses. The container should be heavy so the snake cannot knock it over. Snakes often defecate in the water, so it is vitally important that the water is checked and changed daily.

Misting is generally not needed nor recommended, however, if the humidity is extremely low, a daily misting will provide the higher humidity that aids in proper shedding. Ball Pythons should not be kept in a damp environment since this can lead to skin infections and other problems. Humidity should be maintained at 50% to 60% with a dry substrate.