

Boa Constrictor (*Boa Constrictor Constrictor*)

General Information

Sometimes known as Red Tailed Boas these snakes come in a large number of distinct subspecies. Before you even consider buying one of these, bear in mind that the eventual size of a normal Boa can be around 8 -10 feet. Nevertheless, there are some species that grow somewhat smaller that you might consider. They are very powerful animals and the larger specimens possess the capability to injure or even kill humans. They are definitely a long-term commitment, a point many people do not realise, is that they can live for anything from 20 - 30 years of age on average.



Brief overview of needs

Boa Constrictors are animals with a normally placid disposition and are not renowned for displaying aggressive behaviour in captivity. However, as with all snakes and particularly ones that grow to the size of a larger Boa, you should always be wary! These snakes require a sizeable enclosure, probably much larger than people realise. It will need a water bowl of reasonably large proportions so that it is not easily tipped over and as with all snakes, the Boa will want to hide away and so you must make available a hide box of some description. They do like to climb and so a branch to facilitate this should be provided, so the enclosure should be of a reasonable height. As you will no doubt appreciate, the branch will need to be substantial and stout for these snakes! As far as heating the enclosure is concerned, you should aim for a daytime temperature in the high 80'sF and nighttime mid to high 70'sF. There must be a temperature gradient within the tank, providing a warm and a cool end.

The snake can then regulate its own temperature by moving around the gradient. Boa Constrictors will normally feed well on mice and rats and fully-grown Boas may take a rabbit if they are available. Most snakes will take exception to being handled



within a couple of days of feeding and Boas are no exception. Regurgitation is the distinct possibility under these circumstances.

Finally

Picking up and handling newly purchased snakes is very important. By all means allow it a day or two to settle in to its new enclosure, but don't leave it any longer than that. The snake will probably

move away from you and may even threaten by hissing at you or maybe lashing its tail. Be persistent, this is normally just a bluff. Regular handling is needed for the animal to get used to being picked up and moved. Just be gentle and avoid sudden movements.