

Ball python

Python regius

🇫🇷 Python royal · 🇩🇪 Königspython



REGULATIONS

CITES Appendix II

Keep/trade with legal origin proof; CITES permits for import/export. OPA n: reptile minimum standards (enclosure size, hides, UV/heat). Some cantons/municipalities may require permits for large snakes.



LIFESPAN

20–30 years



ADULT WEIGHT

0.7–2 kg



ADULT SIZE

90–150 cm



LIFESTYLE

Crepuscular, nocturnal



BODY TEMPERATURE

Ectothermic



SEXUAL MATURITY

24–36 months



INCUBATION

55–60 days



LITTER / CLUTCH SIZE

4–11 eggs



Habitat & environment



Type — Secure, well-ventilated terrestrial terrarium with multiple hideouts



Substrate — Coco fibre, non-resinous bark, aspen/poplar chips; absorbent paper in quarantine



Exercise — Nocturnal exploration; enrichment via varied hides and textures



Equipment

- Two identical hides (warm/cool)
- Wide, stable water bowl
- Thermostat with probe on the heat source
- Multiple thermometers/probes + hygrometer
- Protected heat mat/cable/panel
- Low branches and artificial foliage for cover
- Adequate ventilation



Technical parameters



Hot spot

31–33 °C

Ground temperature at the warm spot



Cool spot

26–27 °C



Ambient

26–29 °C

Stable thermal gradient; avoid >34 °C



Humidity

55–70 %

Raise to 65–75% before shedding



Lighting



Photoperiod — 10–12 h/day



UVB need — Not essential but beneficial



Lamp type — Low-intensity UVB fluorescent tube (UVI 0.5–1)



Recommended brands — X-Reptile · Reptile Expert · Solar Raptor · Arcadia



Replacement — Every 6 months (UVB depletes before visible light)



UVB does not pass through glass or plexiglass. Place the lamp inside the terrarium, under a protective grille.

Behaviour

Discreet, stressed by exposure; tightly enclosed hides are essential

 **Social life** — Solitary species; cohabitation not advised outside of breeding

 **Activity cycle** — Crepuscular to nocturnal

Enrichment

- Multiple, varied hideouts
- Different textures/substrates
- Low branches and foliage for cover
- Periodic, low-stress redecoration

Nutrition

Strict carnivore; thawed rodents of appropriate size

Daily base

 **Adult Mouse**
Juveniles/subadults

 **Rat Pup**
For adults; prey diameter $\approx$ snake's maximum girth

★ **Treats (occasional)**

Occasional, to stimulate appetite in functional anorexia

 **Chick**
Day-old chick for scenting or occasional substitution

FREQUENCY

- Juveniles: every 5-7 days
- Subadults: every 7-10 days
- Adults: every 10-14 days
- Post-feeding: avoid handling for 48-72 hrs

TO AVOID

 **Live prey**
Live prey: bite and infection risk

 **Wild-caught prey**
Parasites/pathogens

Health & prevention

Preventive medicine

60-90-day quarantine for every new individual; ectoparasite checks; serial weigh-ins; T°/RH monitoring; strict hygiene (reptile-compatible disinfectants, rinse if necessary)

Vaccination

No standardised vaccinations

Surgery & neutering

Surgery mainly for skin lesions, masses, dystocia if needed

Common conditions

WARNING SIGNS

- Anorexia >6-8 weeks and/or weight loss >10%
- Slightly open-mouth breathing, wheezing, nasal discharge
- Dysecdysis/patchy shed, retained spectacles
- Oral lesions, caseous exudate, halitosis
- Unusual lethargy, persistently raised head
- Cloacal swelling/retained eggs (females)
- Skin burns, blisters

If any of these symptoms appear, prompt veterinary care is essential.
Contact an exotic-pet vet as soon as possible.

Functional anorexia linked to stress/environment

SYMPTOMS Feeding refusal without other systemic signs; stable or slightly decreasing weight

CAUSE Inadequate temperature/humidity, lack of hides, excessive handling, seasonality

PREVENTION Correct thermal gradient, tight hides, reduced stress, night-time feeding

Dysecdysis

SYMPTOMS Incomplete shed, retained spectacles

CAUSE Low humidity, dehydration, ectoparasites

PREVENTION RH 55-70% (65-75% pre-shed), soaking/humid hide, parasite control

Infectious stomatitis

SYMPTOMS Gingivitis, caseous exudate, oral pain, anorexia

CAUSE Trauma, poor hygiene, opportunistic bacteria

PREVENTION Terrarium hygiene, avoid live prey, monitor husbandry parameters

Ophidian pneumonia

SYMPTOMS Wheezing, slightly open mouth, head-up posture, nasal discharge

CAUSE Opportunistic bacteria (Pseudomonas, Aeromonas, Proteus, Klebsiella), Mycoplasma; viral differentials (nidovirus, paramyxovirus)

PREVENTION Stable temperatures, proper ventilation, strict quarantine

Mites (Ophionyssus natricis)

SYMPTOMS Skin irritation, pruritus, mobile black/red specks, mild anaemia

CAUSE Introduction of contaminated animals/items

PREVENTION Quarantine, regular inspection, environmental disinfection

Thermal burns

SYMPTOMS Erythema, blisters, skin necrosis

CAUSE Unthermostatted or unprotected heat source

PREVENTION Reliable thermostat, physical guards on heating elements

Dystocia/follicular stasis (females)

SYMPTOMS Caudal thickening, anorexia, unproductive straining

CAUSE Hypocalcaemia, dehydration, oversized eggs, lack of nesting site

PREVENTION Adequate body condition, hydration, appropriate nesting box

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