

Rosy Boa Constrictor

“*Lichanura spp.*”

Many boas kept in captivity can get very large, to a point where they become a little to large to handle for some owners! For people who want a boa but not the size, the Rosy boa is perfect. It only gets about three feet long, therefore it never needs large prey to eat! Some Rosy boas have soft pastel coloring while others may be darker in color. They have a small, sweet looking head, and a nice disposition. This is the pet for anyone with limited space and time, and cannot have an animal that needs to be walked or kept quiet!

General Diet:

Snakes are carnivores, which means they eat meat. Rosy boas can eat mice. Some may willingly eat frozen mice that are available commercially. The prey items should always be the correct size for the snake and never too big.

Vitamins/Supplements:

Reptiles need to have a vitamin/mineral supplement with calcium and phosphorous. This supplement should be sprinkled on the adult's food items at every second to third feeding and sometimes more often with very young reptiles. We will be glad to explain how often to feed and give supplements to your new pet.

Important Food Tips:

It is best to feed your snake in a place that is not its normal home, such as a large, deep tray. That way the snake will not associate its home as a place that it could be fed. If frozen food is used, it must be thawed out first and at room temperature before it is fed. Never feed a snake anything cold. If live food is fed, watch the snake and prey item carefully. If the snake doesn't seem hungry, take the prey item away, as they will sometimes hurt the snake. You can also put the item in tongs and tease the snake with the prey to see if it wants to eat. Never hold the prey item with your fingers! If it still does not want to eat, try later, in a day or so, and be sure the temperature in the habitat is not too cold.

Housing:

Rosy boas do not get large, so a 20-gallon tank will work well. A full cover should be used on top of a tank with clamps. The habitat will also need two types of lighting systems, which may be built into the cover. One type of lighting has a reptile fluorescent bulb that gives off full spectrum light including UVA and UVB. The UVB is considered important for these snakes so they can absorb calcium properly and stay healthy.

The second light system is for heat. Reptiles are ectotherms, which means they get their heat from an outside source, unlike humans who can make their own heat. Different areas of the habitat should be at different temperatures, so reptiles can move around to heat up or cool off. Boas are comfortable with a daytime temperature in their habitat of 84-88 degrees, and a nighttime temperature of 70-75. Use a ceramic reflector or daylight heat bulb in a heat lamp during the day to keep the temperature up in their habitat. Do not use hot rocks with boas.

Boas like high humidity so mist the habitat daily if needed. A shallow water container will help keep humidity up, and boas like to bathe sometimes, so a water bowl or tray large enough for them to get in and out of easily should be offered constantly.

Some branches, vines, or other decorations that they can climb should be used in the habitat. Do not use any branches from outside, or you might be introducing pesticides or diseases. Use the appropriate reptile litter or substrate on the bottom. Boas like to have a place to hide so provide some sort of cave or hiding spot.

Sanitation/General Care:

Change the water as needed, usually three to five times a week. The litter or substrate used on the bottom should be cleaned as often as needed, and this will depend on habitat size and your pet's size.

General Maintenance:

Mist the habitat once daily if needed, depending on how dry the air is in your area and time of year. Reptiles will shed their skin periodically. Mist them lightly at these times to help them shed the skin more easily, and be sure a large water container is available. Be sure the habitat is always at the right temperature at all times. Change the reptile full spectrum light as often as recommended by the manufacturer, usually every six months to a year. Although the bulb may still be working, it will lose its potency over a certain period of time.

Health Care:

Boas are generally very hardy and healthy when kept in the right conditions. Have them checked by a reptile veterinarian only if needed due to sickness or injury.

Special Section - Handling Precaution:

Reptiles can carry one disease that can be transmitted to people called salmonellosis. Although it is rare for a reptile to carry this disease, it is always important to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after you have handled your pet or anything in your pet's cage. Keep your pet out of the kitchen area and do not allow very small children to handle any reptiles.

Supplies checklist:

Fish tank with full hood	Large water dish or tray
Fluorescent light with reptile UVB bulb	Reptile litter or other substrate
Heat lamp with heat emitter or daylight heat bulb	Vitamin/mineral supplement
2nd heat lamp with lower wattage emitter or night bulb	Books about Rosy Boa Constrictor
Branches or other decorations for climbing & hiding	

