

Red-Tailed Boa Constrictor

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



Species profile:

Red-Tailed Boa Constrictor

The Red-Tailed Boa Constrictor is a beautiful species and can make a wonderful pet when the proper channels are taken. It is important to keep in mind that this species can live as long as 30 years

and can reach lengths of 10 feet, making the Red-Tailed Boa a long term, and large pet. Responsible pet ownership is an absolute must if you are considering bringing this species into your home.

Species Profile: Red-Tailed Boa Constrictor

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| Scientific Name: | <i>Boa constrictor constrictor</i> |
| Natural Environment: | Columbia, Brazil, Mexico, Central America, and others. |
| Average Size: | 10 ft or more. |
| Average Life Span: | 25-30 years. |
| Appearance: | Typical Red-Tailed Boa Constrictors have a tan/brown body with darker brown/black spots. Their tails range from blood red to copper/rust coloring. |
| Habitat | |
| Size: | A 20 gallon or larger aquarium will work for a starter tank. After 2 or 3 years, you will need a specialized large reptile tank to house your boa. Be sure to allow room for food and water dishes and a hide box. |
| Lighting: | No special lighting is needed, but full-spectrum or low wattage lighting may be used during the day. |
| Temperature: | 82°-90°F by day with a 90°-95°F basking area; 78°-85°F by night. |
| Humidity: | 75%; this is necessary for the health of the snake. |

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| Housing: | 20 gallon tank minimum for hatchlings, but this will be outgrown within months. The cage length should be 3/4 the total length of the snake. Fresh, clean water must be available in a container large enough for the snake to soak in. Include a hiding place, something to rub while shedding, such as smooth rocks or sticks, and possibly shelves and/or branches. Snakes are notorious escape artists, so a tight fitting screen top is extremely important. |
| Substrate: | Astroturf or other carpeting, shredded cypress, fir bark, newspaper, or paper toweling all work well. Do not use pine, cedar, or aspen shavings as they can become lodged in the mouth while eating. |
| Diet/Feeding: | Pre-killed mice for hatchlings. Adult snakes are fed pre-killed rats or small rabbits. Never feed wild-caught prey or raw chicken. And, don't feed prey that are wider than the widest part of the snake's body. |
| Behavior/Interaction: | Frequent handling early (at least daily) will help your boa remain docile and even-tempered. Always support the boa's body with both hands and avoid quick, fast movements. Boas over 6 ft should not be handled alone. |