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## Boa constrictor

Adequate temperature		
	Hot point	Cold point
Day temperature	32 C	26 C
Night temperature	27 C	21 C

### Main Features :

The boa constrictor is a species living in a humid tropical environment that loves climbing. A boa of this species can reach between 1.5 m and 4.2 m and can live between 20 and 40 years. It is not recommended to keep several boas in the same vivarium, because it is a solitary animal which is very territorial. He can easily become aggressive towards his peers. It is impossible to differentiate a male from a female with the naked eye. The only way to do this is by inserting a probe, used by a professional. The boa constrictor has exceptional strength! He uses his body to wrap around his prey to suffocate them. With each inspiration of the prey, it serves more and more, until it is no longer possible for the prey to take inspiration.

### Captivity:

The habitat of the boa constrictor must be at least 200 cm X 60 cm X80 cm and be provided with a cover, a heating system and a lighting system emitting ultraviolet rays. As mentioned above, the boa constrictor likes to climb! It is therefore important that its habitat is more vertical than horizontal. It is therefore necessary to provide him with a solid branch or he can climb as he pleases. The addition of small strong branches and foliage will allow him to hide in order to feel safe. The degree of humidity (60-70%) and the temperature (see the table above) must be carefully monitored to preserve the health of your boa. Spraying foliage regularly with water will help maintain adequate moisture levels. To maintain the proper temperature, the use of a heating mat, out of reach of the animal can be used as well as a heat lamp not accessible for the latter. The carpet must be installed under the terrarium to avoid any direct contact. If the animal has access to the heating source, the risk of burns is close to 100%. A reptile does not feel the heat on its skin, it is only once it is too late that it feels the wound. The boa constrictor must have a UV lamp in its habitat! This lamp is essential to his good health because it provides a source of calcium that is normally provided by the sun during his tanning sessions. This lamp should work 10-12h per day and be changed every 6 months to maintain its effectiveness! At night this lamp should be off, unlike the heat lamp that must work all day. In order to better control the time of exposure to UVB light, the degree of humidity and to maintain an adequate temperature, it is strongly recommended to obtain a thermometer and a hygrometer to better control the variants. The ideal is to get a thermostat that will regulate the temperature and a timer to better control the UV lighting time, but it is important to make sure that it always works, even after several years. The recommended substrate for a boa must retain moisture. The use of Aspen or chips is recommended. A gravel or sand substrate is not recommended because of the risk



of the animal ingesting this product, which can cause an intestinal blockage. Moreover, it is strongly recommended to feed your snake out of the vivarium to decrease the risk of bites. It is however possible to use the sand, if you feed your snake out of its vivarium.

### **Food :**

The boa constrictor is a strict carnivore! It is therefore obligatory to provide him with prey so that he can feed himself and satisfy his predatory instinct. In the wild, they feed on small mammals. In domestic life, you can offer him rats, rabbits, guinea pigs, and so on. If your pet tolerates it, you can give the dead animals (from where you know the source) to minimize the risk of injury. For the boa constrictor of size less than 90 cm, it is recommended to provide 1-2 mice per week. For those between 90-200 cm, 1-2 rats per week, and for a snake of more than 200 cm, 1-2 rabbits per week.



### **Frequent health problems:**

- **Infections:** Infections can occur in the mouth (stomatitis), on the skin (bacterial or fungal) or in the form of abscess. This condition is often the cause of poor nutrition, excess moisture or poor hygiene.
- **Parasites:** A snake can sometimes catch parasites in many ways, such as having been outside, being in a boarding house or pet shop or coming from their live food (mice, insects, etc.). If the animal is not treated following the appearance of parasites, it could become anemic and die. Parasites feed on your pet's blood, where they can find the nutrients they need for survival.
- **Moult problem:** A reptile moults several times a year. The moult consists of a change of skin. The animal grows up and the scales become too tight on it. He develops new ones and the old ones have to leave. A moult problem occurs when the degree of humidity is not adequate. It is important not to pull the moult, but offering him baths will be beneficial.
- **Obstruction:** An uninformed owner may offer an oversized animal as a meal to his snake. The snake sometimes has eyes bigger than the belly and tries to eat its prey. That's when he risks choking!
- **Cloacal Prolapse:** A cloacal prolapse is an externalization of part of the digestive system of your reptile. It is therefore possible to see part of the intestine of your reptile out its cloaca (opening that connects the anus and the reproductive system).

As with all animals, it is recommended that an examination be conducted after the purchase of a new reptile and an annual check is required. The annual exam helps prevent health problems that may occur and thus save the life of your pet. If in doubt, a visit to the veterinarian is required! A reptile, whatever it is, will hide its symptoms so as not to become an easy prey for predators (humans). At the slightest change in behavior, contact your veterinarian.

