

DISTRICT PYTHONS

BOA CARE SHEET | *Boa imperator* / *Boa constrictor*

Boas are powerful, long-lived snakes known for their impressive size, beautiful patterns, and generally manageable temperament when properly socialized. Their care requires planning for adult size, secure housing, appropriate heat and humidity, and responsible feeding.

ENCLOSURE

Provide a secure, escape-proof enclosure large enough for the snake to stretch out, turn comfortably, and explore. Adult enclosure size depends heavily on the species, locality, sex, and individual size; many adult common boas require an enclosure around **6 ft x 2 ft x 2 ft or larger**. Larger individuals may need substantially more room. Include at least two secure hides, a sturdy water bowl, climbing opportunities, and enough cover to help the snake feel secure.

TEMPERATURE

Create a thermal gradient. A useful general target is a **warm area around 88-90°F** with a cooler side around **75-80°F**. Avoid excessive heat and always control heating equipment with an appropriate thermostat. Use reliable digital thermometers to monitor the enclosure.

HUMIDITY

For many commonly kept boas, approximately **60-70% relative humidity** works well, with temporary increases during shed when needed. Requirements can vary by species and locality, so husbandry should be adjusted for the specific animal. Good ventilation is important, and the enclosure should not remain constantly wet.

SUBSTRATE

Suitable substrates can include coconut husk, cypress mulch, coconut fiber, or reptile-safe soil mixtures. Choose a substrate that helps maintain appropriate humidity without staying waterlogged. Avoid aromatic woods such as **cedar and pine**. Spot-clean waste promptly and replace contaminated substrate as necessary.

FEEDING

Feed appropriately sized prey based on the boa's age, size, and body condition. Young boas generally eat more frequently, while adults require larger meals less often. Avoid overfeeding; boas can become overweight when fed too heavily or too frequently. **Frozen/thawed prey is generally preferred** because live rodents can injure snakes. Provide fresh water at all times.

HANDLING

Allow a newly acquired boa time to settle in and begin feeding reliably before frequent handling. Support the animal's body, remain calm, and avoid unnecessary restraint. Do not handle immediately after feeding. Larger boas require additional care during handling; as an animal grows, use appropriate assistance and safe handling practices.

BOA CARE - CONTINUED

DISTRICT PYTHONS

SHEDDING

A boa approaching shed may become dull in color and develop cloudy or bluish eyes. Maintain proper hydration and humidity and minimize unnecessary disturbance. After shedding, check the animal carefully for retained skin, especially around the eyes and tail tip.

CLEANING & HYGIENE

Remove feces, urates, and heavily soiled substrate promptly. Wash and refill the water bowl regularly and perform deeper enclosure cleaning when needed. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling reptiles, waste, substrate, or enclosure equipment.

HEALTH

Monitor body condition, breathing, mouth, eyes, skin and scales, feeding behavior, waste, and activity. Wheezing, nasal or oral discharge, persistent abnormal breathing, unexplained weight loss, injuries, unusual swelling, mites, or other concerning changes should be evaluated by a **qualified reptile/exotics veterinarian**.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Boas are a significant long-term commitment and can live for **20-30+ years** with proper care. Some grow into large, powerful animals that require substantial enclosure space, food, equipment, and confident handling. Research the exact species or locality before bringing one home, since adult size and husbandry needs can differ.

THE DISTRICT PYTHONS STANDARD

Proper husbandry is the foundation of a healthy animal.

This care sheet provides general husbandry guidance and is not a substitute for veterinary advice. Boa care can vary by species, locality, age, size, health, and environment. Always research the specific boa you keep.