



Western New York Herpetological Society

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Common Name: Jungle Carpet Python

Latin name: *Morelia spilota cheyneib*

Native to: Rainforests of Atherton Tablelands of northeastern Queensland, Australia. These pythons have the smallest geographic distribution of any carpet python species.

Size: Adults can reach sizes of 4.5 to 7 feet in length in captivity.

Life span: 20 to 30 years in captivity.

General appearance: This species is a medium-sized slender python with a long neck and a large head with pits on the lips that is broader than the neck. These pythons are most noted for their incredible yellow and black markings. The markings can vary greatly and consist of bands, stripes, blotches, freckles, or any combination of these. Colors can vary from a vibrant lemon yellow to deep gold, to a pale yellow wash or even ivory.

Housing requirements:

Enclosure: A large arboreal cage is often best for this species. Adults can be kept in a 40-gallon breeder tank or larger. It is important to make sure that the cage lid is secure, as this species, like most snakes, are known as escape artists.

Temperature: A 75° – 85° F daytime temperature gradient should be offered. Nighttime temperatures should be 5° F – 10° F cooler.

Heat/Light: As with most snakes, it has not been proven that any UV light needs to be provided. A 10 to 12 hour photoperiod should be provided and can be achieved with timers. Light can be provided with a standard fluorescent bulb and fixture. Heat can be provided with basking bulbs, ceramic emitters, or thermal panels. Heat rocks should be avoided as they can often cause burns. Care should also be taken to not place heating elements in the enclosure where the snake can possibly come in contact with the bulb and suffer burns.

Substrate: A variety of substrates can be used. Simple substrates such as newspaper or indoor/outdoor carpeting can be used and are easy to maintain. For naturalistic enclosures substrates such as crushed coconut shell or soil can be used. Not only does this provide a aesthetic enclosure it will also maintain humidity levels better than newspaper or carpeting. Care should be used if using wood shavings to avoid accidental ingestion of the shavings while feeding.

Environment: The jungle carpet python is an arboreal species from the rainforests of Australia. Cage furniture such as branches should be provided to allow this species to climb. Humidity levels should be maintained at 60% to 70% in order to ensure proper shedding. Elevated hide boxes can also be offered to provide an even greater sense of security for your python.

Diet: As with any snake you want to avoid feeding too large of a prey item to your snake. A good rule is to not feed your snake prey that is any larger than 100% to 125% that the largest part of the body of the snake. Hatchlings and juveniles can be offered pinky, fuzzy or hopper mice or rats once a week. Adults can be fed larger prey items such as adult mice or rats every 10 days. Some larger specimens can be offered larger prey items such as small rabbits. Previously killed frozen prey is recommended to eliminate the risk of injury to the snake as well as to help eliminate parasites that the prey item may be carrying.

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This document is for guidance only and should not be used as the sole source of information. New information is being developed daily. It is recommended that a concerted effort be made to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the animals of interest.



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Maintenance: Fresh water should be offered daily. If using newsprint or carpeting then clean as needed. Other substrates should be spot cleaned as needed. Periodically, the enclosure should be completely cleaned and disinfected. A 5% bleach solution makes an excellent disinfectant. Be sure to rinse the enclosure thoroughly after disinfecting. As always, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after handling your python or any cage accessories.

Other references or recommended reading:

Barker, David G. and Tracy M. Barker. 1994. Pythons of the World. Advanced Vivarium Systems Inc. Lakeside, California. P 171.

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