



RAINBOW BOA

Care Guide

Rainbow Boa's, like other Boas are live bearing snakes meaning that they do not produce eggs. Instead, mothers produce egg sacks inside and babies are born from these after being incubated inside the mother

Genus, Species	Epicrates cenchria
Adult Size	5-6.5
Habitat	Forest
Lifespan	20-25+ Years
Diet	Mice, rats once a week
Ambient Temp (f)	75-82
Basking Temp (f)	88-90
Night time Temp (f)	70-80
UVB Zone	1 (UVI 0.1-1.0)
Humidity (%)	80-90
Locality	South America
Difficulty	2/5

Health Check (Common issues)

Eyes– check the eyes are clear of infection, discharge or stuck eye caps (these can occur from a dry shed, increase the humidity or place snake on soak periodically until eye caps come off).

Skin– check the skin for black spots or raised scales which can be a sign of mites. Mites can usually be seen around the eye socket and under the chin. Mites can be treated using a number of chemical products or for a natural cure, Taururus predatory mites can be used regularly for prevention and treatment.

Respiratory Infections– RI is a term for a broad spectrum of infections in the lungs and respiratory system. It is generally caused by ill health along with damp or cold conditions and can be treated with a nebuliser. We always recommend seeing the vet if you suspect RI, however it is extremely rare and is not usually the actual cause of the symptoms that are seen.

Housing your snake:

There are a number of wooden, plastic and glass enclosure available for rainbow boas. Always purchase an enclosure which is a suitable size for your animal. Plastic or wooden and part glass enclosures are the best as glass alone can make it hard to control temperature. Always try to use a thermostat with your enclosure to enable the snake to gain suitable hot and cold temperatures.

There are many substrates available including aspen, lignocel or numerous natural and forest like substrates. Rainbow Boas require a humid environment and so forest substrates like forest floor and cypress mulch are ideal for this species. Provide a large water bowl big enough for your snake to bathe in if it chooses to soak. Depending on the enclosure, you will need a heat mat or bulb/ceramic lamp for your snake in order to provide the required hot spot.

You should also aim to provide a low level UVB bulb. If this is not possible at hatchling size this should be added as soon as the snake is in a tank where it can be provided. The enclosure should have adequate ventilation so that the tank doesn't become mouldy. The substrate can be spot cleaned daily, full cleans may be required more often than every 4 weeks with this species due to the humidity in the tank.

Because Rainbow Boas are from South America, they require a very humid environment. Babies require almost 90% humidity whilst adults are happy with around 75-80%. This can be achieved using moss hides along with a forest substrate which retains humidity.

Handling your snake:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling your snake
- Use a hook to gently stroke the top of your snakes nose to distinguish between handling and feeding times (tap training)
- Pick your snake up from the bottom by scooping it and do not handle the first 3rd of the snakes body where the vital organs are
- Do not handle your snake after eating, always wait at least 48 hours to prevent stress

Sexing your snake:

Male and female snakes may differ between sizes and length of tail, but to get an accurate gender of your snake there are 2 methods available. 1 is to get a set of probes and probe your snake by sliding the probe under the vent towards the tail. If the probe only goes in a small amount then the snake is female, if the snake is male the probe will slide further, this is where the hemipenes are. The other is to 'pop' the snake which involves holding the snakes tail in one hand and gently bending whilst rolling towards the vent with the other hand, exposing the snakes genitals. **Always have your snake sexed by a professional to avoid harm.**

Shopping list:

- Substrate: Bark chips, lignocel, aspen, cypress mulch
- Heat bulb/ceramic/heat mat
- UVB light
- Thermometer, Hygrometer and Thermostat
- Feeding tongs
- A large water bowl that the snake can bathe in
- Hides
- Plants/Décor
- Pet care guide/sheet
- Reptile safe disinfectant

Feeding your snake:

Boas will accept defrosted mice without the need for hot water, however some boas are encouraged by the heat and should be tried for problem feeders. Some boas drop feed which means the prey item should be left overnight for the snake to eat.

Take care to remove food after this time. Some snakes do not feed when shedding so they may miss a feed. If this continues please contact us for feeding advice.

Boas are generally good feeders and once they start strike feeding, care should be taken with large snakes.