

Bredl's Python (*Morelia bredli*)

Difficulty: Intermediate

Bredl's pythons (also known as Bredl's carpet python or the Centralian carpet python) are moderately robust, constrictor-type snakes with a broad base of the head, distinct neck, vertical pupils, and heat pits on the lips. Coloring is brown to reddish with a cream-colored pattern of dark-edge bands, spots, and blotches. The lips are pale with dark transverse bars. The belly is pale cream or yellowish with darker markings. Length is 6.5-7' / 2-2.2m on average, although 8'/2.4m+ is not unheard of.

Bredl's pythons can be found around Alice Springs in southern Northern Territory of Australia. Their habitat is typically dry forest, rocky gorges, or shrubland. These snakes are known to spend time both on the ground and in trees, as well as being active during both night and day.

These snakes can make interesting and engaging pets for keepers who have the space for them. With careful attention to providing appropriate Bredl's python care, this pet may live 20-30+ years.

Shopping List

- 8' x 4' x 4' reptile enclosure (front-opening)
- Dual dome heat lamp with ceramic sockets, x2
- 50w PAR30 halogen flood bulb, x4
- Thick, sturdy branch (for basking)
- Power strip
- Plug-in lamp dimmer
- Infrared thermometer ("temperature gun")
- Digital thermometer/hygrometer device with probes
- 46" T5 HO forest UVB bulb (Arcadia or Zoo Med brand)
- 48" T5 HO light fixture with reflector
- 34" 6500K LED or T5 HO grow lamp, x2
- Pressure sprayer
- Surge protector with digital timer
- 4" sandy substrate
- Reptile hides/caves (at least 2)
- Environmental enrichment items (hollow logs, sturdy branches, live/fake plants, etc.)
- Large water bowl
- Calcium and vitamin supplement powder
- Soft-tipped feeding tongs, at least 12"

Housing

A good formula for estimating the minimum enclosure dimensions for a semi-arboreal snake is: *Full snake length x half snake length x full snake length = length x width x height*

Ideally, for an average Bredl's python, you will need an enclosure of **at least 7'L x 3.5'W x 7'H**, or 2.2m x 1m x 2.2m. However, it's impossible to find a pre-built enclosure of this size without ordering custom, which can be extremely expensive. You can either compromise with a different enclosure with similar volume but still provides enough room for the snake to stretch out and climb, or build your own enclosure to the above formula.

Using an enclosure larger than the minimum is strongly recommended. **Bigger is always better!** Bredl's pythons are active snakes that need a spacious enclosure that offers both terrestrial and arboreal space to facilitate natural behaviors such as thermoregulation, hydroregulation, photoregulation, hunting, climbing, and hiding. This leads to a fitter and overall healthier snake.

Once established, young Bredl's pythons can be housed in an adult-sized enclosure with no problems as long as they have enough places to hide and feel secure.

Can multiple Bredl's pythons be housed together?

Bredl's pythons are not social animals, which means that you don't have to worry about them getting lonely. In fact, keeping multiple pythons together is stressful for the snakes and causes competition for resources, preventing them from thriving. For this reason it's best to house only one python per enclosure.

Lighting & UVB

Bredl's pythons are active during both night and day, which means that they are highly likely to benefit from having a brightly illuminated environment during the day, as well as access to UVB lighting. Aside from regulating their day/night cycle and associated hormonal rhythms, UVB lighting in particular gives the snake all of the vitamin D3 it needs, supports immune health, and encourages increased activity levels. Although Bredl's pythons can technically survive without UVB light, ReptiFiles strongly recommends providing it in order to promote optimum welfare!

Lights should be on for 13 hours/day during summer and 11 hours/day during winter to encourage healthy hormonal cycling.

UVB Lighting

UVB lighting can be tricky, because in order to get the right strength of UVB (UV Index, or UVI), distance and potential mesh obstruction must be considered. To provide appropriate UVB, you will need a [Zoo Med T5 HO Reptisun 5.0](#) or [Arcadia Forest 6%](#) bulb, long enough to span half of the enclosure and placed on the warm side of the enclosure. This bulb should be housed in an Arcadia ProT5 or Vivarium Electronics reflective fixture.

The basking branch should be placed as follows. Given distance is from the snake's back to the UVB lamp.

- UVB mounted over mesh — 9-11"
- UVB mounted under mesh — 12-15"

(These recommendations are approximations based on available data. For best results, use a Solarmeter 6.5 to determine the best placement to achieve a UVI of 2.0-3.0 in the basking area.)

Additional Illumination

In such a large enclosure, halogen and UVB lamps aren't enough to create the kind of bright light that simulates daytime. You will also need a nice bright 6500K LED or T5 HO fluorescent grow light, long enough to span most of the enclosure's length. I prefer the [Arcadia Jungle Dawn LED Bar](#) and the [Bio Dude Glow & Grow LED](#).

These lamps are also great for supporting any live plants you may have in the setup.

Heating

Humans are *warm-blooded*, which means that our body temperature is automatically regulated. Bredl's pythons, however, are *cold-blooded*, which means that they have to move between areas of different temperatures in order to regulate their body temperature. In captivity, using a halogen flood heat bulb is the best way to replicate the type of warmth provided by sunlight.

- **Basking surface: 98-104°F (37-40°C)**
- **Cool end: 82-84°F (28-29°C)**
- **Nighttime temps: 73-77°F (23-25°C)**

Decreasing winter temperatures by 5-10°F / 3-5°C helps encourage natural seasonal hormonal cycling.

Generally speaking, a cluster of 50w halogen flood bulbs such as the [Arcadia Halogen Flood Heat Lamp](#) or [Zoo Med Repti Tuff Halogen Lamp](#) should be plenty to achieve your target surface temperature on the basking branch. You will need multiple heat bulbs to create a large enough basking area to evenly heat your python's coiled body. Start with two bulbs and add more to the cluster as your snake grows.

If you notice that they're getting too hot, dial it down with a plug-in lamp dimmer or proportional thermostat. The most way to dim everything evenly is to plug the lamps into a power strip, and then plug that power strip into the lamp dimmer. If your basking surface is too cool, you will need higher wattage bulbs.

To measure the basking surface temperature, use an infrared thermometer (a.k.a. temperature gun). To measure the temperature of the warm hide, use a digital probe thermometer. The [Etekcity 774](#) is a good infrared thermometer, and most reptile-brand digital probe thermometers function well.

Humidity

Bredl's pythons are native to arid habitats, so they're tolerant of lower humidity levels. Humidity **below 50%** on average is likely to be appropriate, but the snake should still have free access to a humid hide lined by moistened sphagnum moss or substrate to use as needed. Ambient humidity should be tracked via [digital probe hygrometer](#) with the probe placed in the middle of the setup.

You can occasionally mist the habitat with a pressure sprayer to simulate rain and temporarily spike the humidity. This can be particularly helpful to do just before your snake enters a shed cycle. The enclosure should be well ventilated enough to dry out between mistings.

Substrate

Bredl's pythons are healthiest and happiest when they are housed on a substrate (a.k.a. "bedding") that imitates the conditions of their natural habitat. In the Alice Springs area, the soil is extremely sandy, so sand is likely to be the best substrate for this species.

[Zoo Med Repti Sand](#), [Exo Terra Desert Sand](#), the [Bio Dude Terra Sahara bioactive kit](#) work well for a Bredl's python's needs. Alternatively, you can use a DIY mix of [60% plain topsoil + 40% play sand](#), or even just plain sand, depending on the look you're going for.

Provide a substrate layer that is at least 4" deep to cushion your snake's body and help maintain healthy humidity levels. Feces and urates should be removed immediately, and contaminated substrate should be scooped out and replaced. Substrate should be completely replaced every 3-4 month depending on how diligent you are about routine spot-cleaning.

Décor

Decorations play an important role in your python's enclosure as environmental enrichment. These items are not optional — they are essential to promoting positive welfare for your pet! Enrichment items encourage exercise, stimulate your snake's natural instincts, and help stave off boredom.

Décor ideas: cork logs, sturdy branches, drought-tolerant live or artificial plants, additional hides

At minimum, you will need a sturdy climbing branch and two hiding places, but more is preferred. For inspiration of what the enclosure should look like, it's a good idea to look at pictures of Bredl's pythons in their nature habitat.

All branches should be firmly secured to the walls or floor of the enclosure to prevent them from falling and potentially injuring your snake. This is especially important as your pet matures and becomes heavier!

Food

Bredl's pythons are carnivores, which means that they need a diet of whole animal prey in order to get the nutrition that their bodies need. Juveniles should be fed every 10-14 days, and adults should be fed every 3-4 weeks.

A good rule of thumb is to provide a prey item(s) which totals around 10% of your snake's weight, assuming that the snake is not obese. Each item should be no more than 1.5x larger than the snake at its widest point.

Although rats and mice are the most common feeders, Bredl's pythons should eat more than just rats and mice to truly thrive. The key to providing a healthy, balanced diet for your pet snake is VARIETY. Provide as varied of a diet as you possibly can, and you will be rewarded with a healthier snake!

Prey item ideas: mice, African soft-furred rats, domestic rats, hamsters, gerbils, young rabbits, quail, chicks

It's best to offer frozen-thawed prey rather than live to your pet snake. This is safer for the snake and generally considered to be more humane as well. Prey should be thawed in a plastic bag in warm water to around 100°F/38°C before offering. Use soft-tipped feeding tweezers to reduce the risk of getting accidentally bitten when the snake strikes.

Supplements

Bredl's pythons can survive without vitamin or mineral supplements, but they can be a good way to help prevent nutritional deficiencies. Occasionally lightly dust the prey item with a 50/50 mix of calcium and multivitamin before thawing. Arcadia RevitaliseD3 and Repashy CalciumPlus LoD are both good options.

Water

Your snake should have free access to a large bowl of fresh water every day. This water should always be kept clean, with the bowl scrubbed out with veterinary-grade disinfectant weekly.