



Gopher, Bull, & Pine Snakes

Pituophis spp.

Care Sheet

Average Size

6 - 8 feet long

Average Lifespan

15 - 20 years

Diet

These snakes are strict carnivores. They can eat either frozen or live prey items. Babies will start with new born pinky mice. A full-grown adult will eat small to medium rats. When feeding frozen prey, be sure the prey is thawed thoroughly. When feeding live prey, be sure to monitor the feeding to prevent the prey from attacking the snake.

Feeding

Feed babies 1 - 2 times a week. At 2 - 3 months of age you can reduce to once weekly. Adults can eat weekly, although some keepers feed every other week. The prey size should be equal to the largest part of the snake's body in girth.

Housing

Habitat - These snakes range from Mexico to Canada. In the wild they are found in forested areas. Keep the cage warm and dry and provide plenty of places for hiding. These snakes may be kept alone or in groups. If housed together snakes should be of similar size to avoid injury. Breeders generally keep these snakes in separate enclosures until breeding time. At that point, the breeder will house the snakes together.

Size - Depending on sub species, adults must have a minimum cage size of 30" Long x 12" Deep x 12" High, although many keepers prefer a larger cage. Babies can start in 10-gallon tanks.

Substrate - Shredded aspen is a perfect substrate. These snakes love to burrow. Shredded aspen provides a fluffy substrate easy for burrowing and cleaning. Provide 3-6 inches of substrate.

Temperature - Gopher, Bull, & Pine Snakes require a basking spot of 85°- 90°F. The cool end of the tank can be as cool as 70°F.

Humidity - Humidity levels should be between 30% - 50%.

Watering - Provide fresh drinking water daily. These snakes like to soak their body in water. Provide a bowl of water large enough so that the snake can fully submerge its body.

Lighting - Since this is a nocturnal species, it requires only one light bulb. This is the heat lamp which also emits UVA. There is no current proof that the animal requires UVB light, although some keepers prefer to provide UVB.

Plant and Fish bulbs are not UVB bulbs.



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