

AMAZON TREE BOA CARE GUIDE

Corallus Hortulanus

Introduction Amazon Tree Boas are one of the most variable snakes in terms of naturally occurring colour and pattern. They are a slender, live bearing member of the Boidae family of snakes. Being nocturnal (active at night) and an arboreal (living in trees) species makes them a fabulous display snake. Also known as garden tree boa, common tree boa, dog headed boa.

Experience Level Intermediate to Experienced

Temperament and handling Whilst ATBs are known for being defensive and somewhat aggressive we have found that in general this is largely a consequence of how you handle them.

An ATB will quite happily glide through your fingers without showing any signs of aggression, however as soon as you try to restrict their movement they will become nervous and many will attempt to bite!

In general they are a little nervous and may bite if they feel threatened, however, if you treat them with respect and offer gentle handling without restricting their movement they will normally become reasonably tame.

It should however be noted that they are not a snake to carry around your neck or walk around whilst holding as they will strike at you. If other people or animals move around near you during handling, the snake will more than likely strike at them. The trick with ATB handling is treating them with a lot of respect using confident but slow and gentle movements without restraining. If they are the snake for you and you treat them in this manner they will give you a lot of enjoyment.

Colours and Patterns Amazon Tree Boas are found in various colour and pattern phases which include:

Garden Phase (Usually Grey/Brown/Black)

Coloured Phase (Yellow - Orange - Red)

Tiger (Striped)

Paradox

Calico

ATBs display immense variation in colour and pattern and many specimens are difficult to categorise into a single colour or pattern phase and for this reason we would prefer to just appreciate each individual specimen for it's own unique qualities!

Expected Adult Length 100 to 180cm, their tail is approximately 15-20% of their total length.

Recommended Housing Vivarium or plastic tubs

We use vivarium for adults as we find them much easier to get the balance between humidity and ventilation just right. For neonates and juveniles we use tubs.

Other requirements:

-Large water bowl mainly to assist with keeping the humidity up but also they may use it to drink and bathe (we put greenery in the water bowl so they can bathe if they wish whilst still feeling secure).

-Climbing branches (not straight poles) with twists, turns, joins and knots complete with some form of hiding areas such as large leaves overhanging.

-Substrate that can accomodate their high humidity requirements.

-We always offer them a hide on the floor, some will use it more than others. If they are using it for the majority of the time then it is an indication that they do not feel safe and secure with the "branches" you have offered and it is therefore a good idea to rethink your cage furniture, maybe adding extra greenery to the branches would help.

Neonate Housing When establishing neonates, we house them in a well ventilated plastic tub with enough plastic greenery to loosely fill the tub so that they can easily move through it whilst remaining secure. The tub has around an inch (2-3cm) of water in the bottom to ensure they have the correct humidity without the need to disturb them by constantly misting.

As you can see, we heat the tubs with a heat mat (controlled by a thermostat) which is vertically mounted on the wall.

Temperature Range 27C (80F) to 32C (90F)

Humidity ATBs require fairly high humidity therefore regular misting of their enclosure is essential.

Recommended Heating Viv - Guarded heat , spotlight or heat mat (mounted vertically).

Tub - Heat mat or cable.

In our Boa room we use ceramic heaters to maintain the background temperature in the entire room with a red basking spotlight in one corner of each vivarium.

Whichever method of heating is used, the temperature should be controlled by a suitable thermostat and monitored using a digital thermometer

Important Note: If you are housing an adult female ATB who could give birth it is imperative that you check that the heater guard is suitable. Think about how small a new born snake is and remember that ATBs climb and in all likelihood will head for the heat. We have found that the only guards that work effectively are those that are custom fitted.

Origin South America

Natural Environment ATBs live in tropical rainforests and spend almost their entire lives in trees, this includes hunting, eating, sleeping and also giving birth!

Recommended Substrate Amazon's require a fairly high humidity therefore a substrate that can accommodate this is essential. Orchid bark, Peat, Coconut bark are among the best natural substrates.

Natural Diet Their arboreal habits, long teeth and prehensile tail means ATBs are well adapted to take birds but they also feed on lizards, frogs, rodents and other small mammals in the wild.

Diet Rodents. mice rather than rats as have found rats to be a little too fatty.

Most ATBs prefer their food warm. Many will feed better at night often taking warm food from a perch close to them once it gets dark. A great number of ATBs will only strike feed.

Feeding Frequency The recommended feeding schedule for neonates is a single pinkie/fuzzie mouse approximately every 5 to 10 days.

Yearlings and young/small adults should normally be fed every 1 to 2 weeks.

In our opinion, adult ATBs do best by being fed every 2 to 4 weeks depending on their condition on 1-2 adult mice.

As with any species of snake we tend to feed females more often than males. Gravid females should be offered smaller food items more frequently and although they will normally feed much more at this time, not all specimens will continue to do so throughout the entire pregnancy.