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Information Sheet: Is BIG Beautiful?



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For you who keep snakes, this month's question is, "Is Big Beautiful?" What do I mean by big? A large 20ft Burmese Python? No. A 10ft boa constrictor? No. In fact, I'm talking about the VIVARIUM. For people who do not know me (some of the people who do would say you are the lucky ones), Marcia (my wife) and I started to keep snakes back in the mid 70s when just keeping them alive was a feat in itself. During the 80s we regularly bred the Burmese Python, Common Boa, & Corn Snakes.

One of the many questions we are asked is, "What size vivarium does my snake require." The answer we give them is, "As small as possible within reason." Most people are taken aback by that reply, as they imagine that snakes need a great deal of space. The next question I ask is, "What does a snake do for most of its life?" Give up? It spends it's time HIDING from its enemies: remember a snake is a meal to many creatures, including other snakes. This is why, given a chance, snakes will find the safest place they can in a vivarium- in a hide box, up a branch, on top of the light or under the substrate or newspaper. If they can find a space that they can just crawl into, then nothing else will get in and eat them.

Our vivariums at home are made out of plywood (with glass front). This way we have tried to simulate a hide. Our furnishings in the vivarium are 2 or 3 large rocks, a water bowl, and depending on the snake, a branch or two. Newspaper is

the substrate we use.

OK, you say, vivarium as small as possible within reason. That means nothing to us: you could say how long is a piece of string. To try and give you some guide, I would house one Royal Python in a 24" x 24" x 24" vivarium. A colony of 2 or 3 Royals in a 48" x 24" x 24" vivarium.

Going onto the larger constrictors- an 8ft Boa in a 5ft x 2ft x 2ft vivarium; a group of Boas in a 6ft x 2ft x 2ft vivarium; a large Burmese Python (15ft or so) – 4ft x 4ft x 2ft vivarium.

If I can be of anymore help, please contact me