

PYTHON CURTUS, DIFFICULT IN FEEDING?

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When I became the owner of a *Python curtus* (blood python), at the last meeting of the Snake Society, I didn't expect it to start feeding readily as the species has a reputation of being difficult to keep. Furthermore this specimen was an imported, rather thin one, measuring about one metre in length and had been brought from England that day. Everyone can imagine my surprise when it started feeding two days later. After refusing a live rat it accepted within an hour a dead rat of considerable size which had been placed next to it. Four days later it ate two dead rats. The snake sloughed two weeks later and then ate two live rats. Since then the snake has readily accepted dead and live rats. Examination of the faeces showed no parasites (!!). I wonder if my snake is just an exception of the rule which says blood pythons are difficult to keep or have I created a favourable environment. The snake is housed in a terrarium (110x70x70 cm) heated to 29°C and with a relative humidity of 90% which was prepared a few days prior to the purchase of the snake. (This in accordance to the article by P.J. Stafford (1982). To obtain the humidity the terrarium is sprayed with water several times a day with the snake being disturbed as little as possible. The right half of the terrarium is divided in two by a wooden shelf, 40 cm above the floor. The shelf is fitted with a stainless steel shower floor serving as a watertrough. A 40 Watt spotlight is used for heating. A 50 Watt heating cable, connected to a thermostat, is used to heat the floor. The right side of the terrarium and



Fig. 1. *Python curtus*. Foto: R. de Lang.

the top 30 cm of the front, is fitted with sliding glass windows, the rest of the terrarium is made of wood. The floor is covered with Novilon/vinyl, the joints of which are sealed with silicone. In order to keep the terrarium as hygienic as possible no other substrate material is used. A tree and a hiding box (a small basket) are present.

REFERENCES

Stafford, P.J., 1982. Litteratura Serpentiun,
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