herpy

ANGUIDS

Red-lipped Arboreal Alligator Lizard

Abronia lythrochila

Abronia lythrochila is a small, arboreal alligator lizard from the pine and oak forests of the highlands of Chiapas in southern Mexico. It reaches about 25-30 cm, has blood-red scales along the lower lip, gives birth to live young and eats insects. It needs a tall, airy enclosure with moss and bromeliads and cool temperatures. Its care is only sparsely documented and suits experienced keepers.

Family: Anguidae Former name: *Abronia lythrochrima; Gerrhonotus lythrochilus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**25-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Montane forest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 50 × 75 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**20-27 °C**
Basking spot	**26-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**10-18 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Litter size	**1-18 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**180-240 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Care of *Abronia lythrochila* is only sparsely documented, and the figures given here are borrowed from the closely related *Abronia graminea*, which is the best-known species in the genus.

TEMPERATURE

Abronia lythrochila does not tolerate heat. It lives higher than most of its relatives, where the forest rarely gets warmer than 24 °C, so cool conditions are particularly important.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Relative humidity should be 60-80 %, with the highest values at night and after misting. Mist the plants, walls and animals lightly almost every day, ideally with a pressure sprayer or a fogger that produces a fine mist.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs UVB. The best option is natural, unfiltered sunlight, for example in an outdoor mesh cage in dry weather in summer, with shade and a cool surface so that the animal can move away.

FEEDING

Abronia lythrochila feeds on insects and other small animals. Offer crickets, grasshoppers, mealworms, cockroaches, snails, spiders and soft larvae, for example green caterpillars and fly larvae with a high calcium content.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is quiet and shy. The animal spends most of the day sitting still on a branch or in a bromeliad and basks for short periods. It is not an animal to be handled.

NATIVE RANGE

Mexico and Guatemala.