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SNAKES

Green Tree Python

Morelia viridis

Morelia viridis is a bright green, arboreal python from the rainforests of southern New Guinea and Cape York. It rests in tight coils over a branch and strikes at prey from a fixed ambush perch. The young are yellow and turn green during the first year of life. The species is beautiful and long-lived, but makes demands on humidity, peace and handling.

Family: Pythonidae Former name: *Chondropython viridis; Python viridis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-160 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**90 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**27-31 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-22 °C**
Humidity	**40-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**29-43 months**
Clutch size	**6-32 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**39-65 days** at 29-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs an enclosure of at least 90 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height). Larger is better, and 120 × 60 × 60 cm is a good size for an adult female.
TEMPERATURE	There must be a clear gradient. The basking spot on the uppermost branch should be 27-31 °C and the cooler part of the enclosure 24-26 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 40-70 % and fluctuate: higher just after misting and then falling to about 40 % before misting again.
LIGHTING AND UVB	Young animals are diurnal, and adults are most active at dusk and at night, but both benefit from clear daylight. The light should be on for 12 hours a day and switched off completely at night.
FEEDING	*M. viridis* eats whole prey. Adults are fed mice, small rats, hamsters, gerbils and quail, preferably varied, and young are fed small mice. Prey must be thawed from frozen and warmed to about 38 °C.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Morelia viridis* is shy and sedentary. It rarely becomes as tame as many colubrids and should not be handled every day. It has a reputation for biting, but this is most often a result of rough treatment.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia.