

Blue-Tongued Skinks

Tiliqua ssp.

CAGING: Adult Blue-Tongued Skinks will require fairly large enclosures (at least 3-4' long and 2' wide). They are not arboreal, so height is not that important. They are active however and should have as much room as possible. Blue-Tongues should not be housed together. Even at breeding time males and females should be mated under supervision. Animals of both sexes can cause extensive damage to another skink.

Blue-tongues can be kept on a variety of substrates. Newspaper is perhaps the best for its cheapness and availability. CareFresh™ is another great substrate; most Blue-Tongues will burrow if given the chance. Sand is not really appropriate due to possibility of ingestion and impaction. A hide box is very important for your lizard to feel secure.

WATER: Keep a small bowl of clean water in the cage at all times. Blue-Tongues may be misted before they shed, but they generally do not appreciate any humidity.

TEMPERATURE Blue-Tongues are native to Australia, New Guinea and Tasmania and most species prefer a hot, dry environment. A basking spot with daytime temperatures of 90-100F should be provided. A temperature gradient to a cool area of 80-85F is vital. Nighttime temperatures can drop to the mid-70's Fahrenheit. Thermometers and thermostats are necessary to maintain the proper temperatures in a Blue-Tongue enclosure. Too cool is not good, but too hot is even worse. A full-spectrum/UVB light is not needed as long as a proper diet is fed. **Never leave the cage in direct sunlight!**

FOOD: New information about Blue-Tongue diet requirements is being discovered every day. Most species seem to be primarily carnivorous/insectivorous. Fruits such as kiwi, mango and cantaloupe are usually welcome treats. Mixing finely chopped vegetables such as collard or mustard greens, romaine lettuce and summer squash into dog food or monitor/tegu food seems to be the best way to get these skinks to eat veggies.

Super worms, crickets and pinky/fuzzy mice are good food staples for these lizards. When feeding dog or cat food, stay with a premium, all beef or chicken formula. Mixing in a calcium supplement once or twice a week is a good idea.

CLEANING: Cages must be kept clean to prevent disease. Anti-bacterial cleaning solutions are recommended. One ounce of bleach in ten ounces of water is one such solution. Rinse the cage with clean water after using any solution. Don't use Lysol, Lestoil or other such oil based cleaners; they are deadly to reptiles.

HANDLING: Blue-Tongued Skinks tolerate human interaction very well. Although a little more 'squirmy' than their Bearded Dragon cousins, Blue-Tongues will usually sit on a shoulder or be cradled in an arm quite happily. They are very curious animals and benefit greatly from supervised exploring in a secure area that will give them a lot of stimulation and exercise. Young Blue-Tongues can be nippy and will need gentle handling over time to tame down.

This Care Sheet was originally written by New England Herpetological Society. It can be found at www.neherp.com or www.AnimalCityInc.com

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