

# Herpetoculture House

*The Only True Digital Reptile Magazine*



## Geckos in Fact or Fiction

## Ball Python Care



## Western Banded Geckos

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# Green Tree Python

By Scott Powley  
Powley Exotic Reptiles  
Photos courtesy of: Austin P. Taylor

Green Tree Pythons (*Morella viridis*) are unique and amazing reptiles. Once a Green Tree Python's (GTP) needs are met they are relatively easy to care for. I will review the details for successful



husbandry of GTPs, which include set up, feeding schedules, temperatures and humidity. This overview is based on my experiences and my discussion with other GTP breeders. Collaborating and sharing our ideas allows for growth, enrichment and knowledge in our hobbies and businesses.

Let me first admit that I have the "Chondro Bug." It started eight years ago after reading a book by Greg Maxwell, "The Complete Chondro". As a result, I now have been breeding GTPs for over 6 years, and my collection includes more than 30 pythons. My collection is mostly of designer type animals. I attend the majority of Reptile trade shows in Southern California to educate, sell and to meet other GTP owners.

Let's first go over set up. Set up can be extremely simple or quite elaborate. The main concerns should be the following:

- Heating
- Humidity
- Terrarium Size
- Cage Material
- Feeding

## Heating

In my opinion, heating is one of the most important aspects of owning a GTP. Heating can be done in various ways including heat pads, heat bulbs or radiant heat panels. My first GTP was in a Vision Cage 222 with a lamp shroud. I used a 75 watt bulb in the lamp shroud and used 1/2 to 3/4 inch sprinkler PVC as perches in the cage. The 222 Vision cage is made of sturdy molded plastic and is water proof. It measures approximately two feet in height by two feet width and



by two feet deep. This is a basic set up; the GTP will come closer or move further away to the lamp shroud depending on its heating needs. I did not use any type of heat controller on this

basic set up. This enclosure cost only a few hundred dollars, and GTPs could live in it for its whole life. Set up can become more advanced the more you get involved with this species. You can add radiant heat panels, thermostat heating controllers, misting systems, and lights. Other cages I also recommend are PVC cages, habitat cages or large tubs with lids. I keep my GTP cage hot spot in the high eighties and their ambient temperatures of their cage in the low to mid eighties. If your set up does not allow you to maintain these temperatures this could lead to conditions conducive to respiratory infections. If your set up becomes too hot your GTP may cram up to the coolest corner of the cage. The maximum temperatures should be in the low nineties (Fahrenheit).



### Humidity

Humidity is important to GTPs however they should NOT have a constant wet environment in their cages. I spray on average twice a week and will completely saturate their cages (condensation on cages glass). I will allow a complete drying out of their cages before spraying again. This will help prevent any molds or bacteria from growing. There have been many discussions with breeders on humidity. I spray my cages with reverse osmosis (R/O) water ever several days and will let my cages completely dry out. The night before cleaning, my cages are drenched with R/O water. The humidity will assist with shedding, hydration and defecation. I have noticed many of my animals will defecate once the cages have been heavily drenched. I clean

all the cages the day after they have been drenched. If cages are left with humidity for long periods, bacteria, molds and mildew will grow, and these are not healthy for your animal. You can locate R/O water usually in front of grocery stores and it usually cost 25 cents to 35 per gallon. I do not recommend tap water. Cages are easily cleaned when using R/O water and it does not stain glass like regular tap water. In my opinion R/O water is healthier for your GTPs and it allows for easier cleaning of cages. Do not over spray.

### Size

There are many breeders who use much smaller enclosures than what I use, and I have started to downsize to some smaller cages; however, I feel that GTPs do need to have some room to cruise and investigate at night. Because I am able to keep a heat gradient in my cages (discussed above in heating) my animals do well in larger cages. For my adult females I use a Vision 322 with a Pro Panel for heat. The Vision 322 measures 36 inches (3 feet) in width, 23 inches deep and 21 inches in height. I order the 322s without the vents and this allows me to control the heat and humidity better. If you have vents, they can be covered with duck tape or plastic to prevent heat and moisture from escaping. I use PVC for perches and white bath towels for my substrate, making it much easier for me to have an easy to clean and uniform set up. My adult males go in a similar terrarium, in Vision 222, measuring close to 2' x 2' x 2'. Males do not need as much room as females. My yearlings pythons are in CB 30 tubs, and babies (Neos) are housed in quart-sized plastic shoe boxes. These are set up in

a rack system until the pythons are ready for their permanent large homes. Many GTPs breeders do use smaller cages or rack systems because room for these cages can be challenging.

### **Cage Material**

I recommend GTP cages should be made of PVC (There many manufactures who use expanded PVC, such as Boaphile), molded plastic (Vision Cages), or plastic hollow core (Habitat Systems). I recommend cages that can hold heat, humidity, and are water proof. I do not recommend glass cages because glass cages does not retain heat well. I know a few instances where individuals who purchased GTPs could not get their animals to eat in glass cages. Once they were set up in a more secure surroundings they settled in and began eating again. There are other individuals who have had success with glass cages; however I prefer to stay away from these types of set ups.

### **Feeding**

I feed my GTPs only MICE. I do have a few males who prefer rats, but I recommend feeding mice. Because I breed my own rodents, I feed live and pre-killed while most GTP breeders feed frozen thawed mice. The reason why I feel mice are heather for GTPs is that they are smaller meals with less fat. Remember GTPs are slim arboreal pythons. I feed my adult females two mice a week and a little more before cycling (getting ready for breeding), and I feed my males only one mouse a week. I keep my males slim. GTPs can easily be overfed and in most cases owners do overfeed. Over-feeding can lead to prolapsing when your animal defecates. This will require a vet visit or services of

an experienced person to push the prolapsed back into the vent of your GTP. If not performed quickly your animal could die. It is easier and less expensive if you just do not overfeed.

Thank you for taking the time to reading this article. Please stop by our website at [www.powleyexoticreptiles.com](http://www.powleyexoticreptiles.com). We produce many designer Green Tree Pythons and Asian Rat snakes. We look forward to your visit.

