

## BLUE TONGUE SKINK

- Native to Australia, New Guinea and Tasmania, the Blue Tongue Skink gets its name from its brightly colored blue tongue. They have large solid bodies around 20" as adults, with short legs and a lifespan of 10-20 years.
- Are quite docile and gentle; are easily tamed and handled.

### Diet

Skinks are omnivores, requiring a variety of meat, fruits and vegetables. Their diet should consist of dark leafy greens, a vegetable mixture, various fruits, crickets, mealworms, meats, eggs, and mice. A calcium/vitamin D supplement should be added to the food.

A large, shallow, sturdy bowl of water should be available at all times. They may defecate in it so it should be checked regularly. Bowl should be big enough for them to climb easily in and out of for bathing. Clean the bowl and refresh the water daily.

### Housing

Skinks need a fairly large 40-55+ gallon habitat. Ground dwellers, provide a wood or mulch-type substrate or reptile carpet, with good hiding places and a secure lid. Though skinks don't climb well, include some branches, rocks and décor. A humidity box will help with sheddings.

Provide a 95°F basking area and a cooler 75-85°F area with a night temperature in the 70's. A basking light or ceramic heat emitter plus an under-tank heater on the basking side works well. In addition, a full spectrum UVB light should be provided 10-12 hours per day.

### Handling & Care

Blue-tongue skinks are very docile, curious lizards. They tame easily, however, they can bite if they feel threatened or mistake your hand for food. When handling your skink, use both hands, supporting all limbs. They do develop claws, and while they don't particularly scratch, always supervise others who are not used to holding them. If your skink is handled roughly, it may drop its tail, which will re-grow.

Blue-tongues are messy animals. Clean out feces and uneaten food daily. Clean the entire habitat weekly.

Wash your hands with anti-bacterial soap after handling any animal.

### Health

Blue-tongues are hardy lizards, and provided that you care for them properly, there should be very few health problems. Osteodystrophy due to lack of calcium is common; a well balanced diet with a calcium-vitamin D supplement is important.

Another common problem is scale rot and blister disease. This usually occurs due to the enclosure being too damp or humid, which can also cause respiratory infections.

Take your skink to an exotics veterinarian if you notice: weight loss or decreased appetite; mucus in the nose or mouth; labored breathing; lethargy; skin lesions; abnormal feces; paralysis of tail or legs.



### SKINK CHECKLIST

- Large Tank
- Screen top
- Large Water Dish
- Hiding Place
- Decor
- Calcium-Vitamin D Supplement
- Heat Sources
- UVB Lighting
- Substrate
- Thermometers (2)
- Hygrometer
- Humidity box
- Transport container
- Skink Book