**Blue Tongued Skink – Care Sheet**

**Bearded Dragon:** Tiliquia spp.

Blue-tongued skinks are interesting lizards that are often quite docile and can make fascinating pets for the reptile owner looking for something a little different! Making sure to note the following information can help you raise a happy, healthy skink.

**General Info**

Age: 10-20 years

Size: 12-24 inches (including the tail)

Weight: 12-30 ounces

Sexual maturity: 3 years

Live birth given 3-5 months after breeding, 10-20 young are born

**Behavior**

A young skink may be skittish at first and may squirm to get away. As they grow older, however, they quickly become accustomed to human owners. You should always supervise small children when they wish to handle a skink. When they feel threatened, they may open their mouth and hiss and display their bright blue tongue in an effort to scare away a predator. If these warnings are ignored, they may bite, though in captivity this is rare. Blue-tongued skinks may be territorial if you try to put more than one in the same cage, and especially males will fight. We recommend separate cages for each lizard.

**Diet**

Blue-tongued skinks are true omnivores, eating a variety of plant and animal matter. In the wild this includes various insects and worms, small vertebrates like rodents or lizards, various plants, flowers, and fruits. In captivity we recommend offering a variety of food items such as:

* Healthy greens like mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens, dandelion greens
* Various squashes, zucchini, sweet potato, bell peppers, carrots
* Broccoli, snow or snap peas, green beans, other green veggies
* Fruit offered as a treat
* Crickets, Dubia roaches, and phoenix worms are good staple prey items
* Superworms, waxworms, and mealworms can be offered for variety, but are high in fat so they should not be staples
* Favorites include earthworms, slugs, and occasional pinkie mice
* Avoid dog or cat foods

Adults should have their food dusted with a phosphorus-free

calcium supplement 2-3 times a week and a multivitamin weekly. Juveniles should have calcium supplementation more often.

Of course, make sure your skink always has fresh, clean water available.

**Environment & Caging**

Your skink will need plenty of space for moving around as it grows older. While it only needs a 20-gallon tank when less than a year old, we recommend a cage that is a minimum of a 40 gallon but preferably a 4 ft. x 2 ft. x 2ft. for an adult. The cage should:

* Be kept at a temperature of 75-85ºF and has a basking area of 90-100ºF. Various heat sources from above can be used such as a heat lamp or ceramic heat emitter.
* Contains a UV light that provides light in the UVB spectrum. It may be necessary to replace the bulb even if it is still producing light. Do not let glass or plastic sit between your lizard and the light. The UV light is essential for good health.
* Contain substrate for digging such as coconut fiber, cypress mulch, a mix of substrates with sphagnum moss, or even recycled paper beddings or shredded paper. Non-particulate beddings like fleece or towels can be used if multiple layers are provided for digging. Skinks are prone to issues with dust or bedding in their eyes, nose, or mouth so this needs to be monitored and bedding changed if needed.
* Contain branches, ramps, and rocks for climbing and basking and areas to hide in
* Maintain a high humidity level of at least 50-60% but more for some species. Particulate substrates can aid in keeping humidity up, along with misting the tank or using a humidifier. Many skinks also enjoy a humid hide box made out of a sealed Tupperware container with small hole to enter and exit with damp paper towels, towels, or moss in the bottom.

**Veterinary Care & Preventive Care**

We recommend a physical examination every 6-12 months, so a vet can perform a fecal examination and order blood tests if necessary. In the meantime, look out for warning signs of health problems like anorexia, weight loss, trembling, limping, swollen belly, constipation, diarrhea, or a change in behavior. Common medical conditions of skinks include trouble shedding on the toes leading to constriction and secondary infection and upper respiratory infections.

Additionally, as a reptile owner, it is important to wash your hands with warm soap and water every time after handling your skink. Many reptiles carry salmonella, which can make you

sick if you do not take the proper precautions.