

## Burmese Pythons: Cool or Cruel?

Next time you take a break from shopping in the mall to browse what's new in the pet store, make sure you are well educated before purchasing a Burmese python. Instead of calling a friend on your cellphone to tell them that you're picking up a cool new exotic pet, go home and research the pros and cons of owning a Burmese python.

Pet stores mainly sell very young Burmese pythons which are less than two feet long. Husbandry is complex but manageable at first. At this age, the python requires live mice as food. A large 20 gallon aquarium should be maintained at 80 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit with a basking area of 90 degrees Fahrenheit. These snakes require high humidity and regular cleaning of the cage and water bowl.

Unfortunately, these snakes don't stay very small. By three years of age, the average Burmese python is 10 feet long, over forty pounds, and require live rabbits for food. When full grown, a Burmese python can be up to 26 feet long and 300 pounds.

With zoos overstocked with Burmese pythons, where do you house your 26-foot long, 300-pound snake? Not to mention that they live up to 25 years! Most owners cannot house or handle a snake of this size and have no alternative besides euthanasia.

Burmese pythons can be cool if owned by educated, responsible owners. Irresponsible, uneducated owners who euthanize their python because they 'just didn't know' is cruel. For more information, please visit <http://www.anapsid.org/>.