



Green Tree Pythons

Morelia viridis

ADVANCED · 4–6 FT ADULT · 15–20 YR LIFESPAN
NOCTURNAL · ARBOREAL · NEW GUINEA & AUSTRALIA

The showpiece of the python world. A green tree python at rest (that impossible saddle of green draped over one branch) looks more like sculpture than pet, and hatchlings arrive blazing yellow or red before earning the adult color on their own schedule. The honest headline: this is a display animal for experienced keepers. Nippy, stress-sensitive, and particular about its air, it rewards precision and punishes shortcuts.

AT A GLANCE	
Difficulty	Advanced
Adult size	4–6 feet
Lifespan	15–20 years
Temperatures	78–85 °F ambient, 72–75 °F night
Humidity	60–80%
UVB	Low UVB beneficial
Diet	Frozen/thawed mice & rats
Feeding cadence	Every 10–14 days
Native range	New Guinea & Australia



Few snakes photograph like a green tree python. A single loop of emerald stops NARBC aisle traffic every show.

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01

Look More, Handle Less

Let's be straight. This is a snake you keep to look at. Green tree pythons can be nippy, they're wired for stillness, and they gain nothing from casual handling. When you must move one, move the perch with the snake aboard. Never pry a settled animal off its branch. Days are for tight, motionless coils; nights are for the slow ambush posture. It's an advanced-keeper species: the numbers aren't hard to hit, but the margins around them are thin.

02

Housing: Build Up, Not Out

Height is the whole game: **vertical orientation and horizontal perches at multiple heights are non-negotiable**. A green tree python lives on its branches, not its floor. Hatchlings settle best in small, simple setups where security is easy to find; adults earn a taller cage with a network of perches at varying heights and distances from the heat. No rack suits this species at any age. Size up gradually. An anxious snake in a big empty box stops eating.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	12×12×12	12×12×18	Small-enclosure rearing is standard; fragile and stress-sensitive, so handle minimally.
Juvenile	18×18×18	18×18×24	Ontogenetic color change: yellow or red turns green around 18–24 months.
Subadult	24×18×24	24×24×36	Never pry it off its perch roughly; move the perch, not the snake.
Adult	24×24×36	36×24×36	Strict arboreal. Localities (Biak, Aru, Sorong, Merauke) command locality pricing.

Minimums and preferred sizes from Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Vertical orientation, never racks, at every stage.

03

Warm Days, Cooler Nights

Hold the ambient at 78–85 °F by day and let it ease to 72–75 °F at night. That drop is part of the program, not a failure. This is a canopy snake from New Guinea and Australia; it handles a mild cool-down far better than an overshoot, so heat gently from above and verify temperatures at perch height, where the snake actually lives. Low UVB is beneficial: a shallow gradient over the upper perches, with shaded foliage to retreat into.

04

Humidity That Breathes

Run 60–80% humidity, and make it a cycle, not a swamp: mist so it climbs, then let the enclosure dry back down before the next round. Constant saturation with still air is the classic green tree python killer; it breeds respiratory infection and skin trouble. Pair moisture with real ventilation. A water bowl below covers baseline drinking, but many prefer to sip misted droplets from their own coils. One more reason the spray routine matters.

05

Perches, Plants, Substrate

The perch network is the furniture that matters: secure horizontal branches at several heights, sized so the coils grip comfortably, plus foliage (live or artificial) for cover between them. Underneath, run a moisture-holding substrate that helps you steer humidity without going soggy. Rearrange with a light touch; this species values predictability, and a remodeled cage can put a sensitive animal off food. Enrichment here means choices: warmer and cooler perches, open ones and planted ones.

06

Feeding the Ambush Hunter

An ambush hunter with a slow metabolism: frozen/thawed mice, or modest rats for bigger animals, every 10–14 days. Offer at night with long tongs at perch height and let the strike come to you. The classic mistake is generosity. A snake that barely moves gains weight fast, and obesity shortens lives. Keep prey modest, keep the calendar honest, and judge condition by muscle tone, not by how eagerly the animal strikes.

07

Health Red Flags

A green tree python that spends its days on the floor is telling you something's wrong. A settled adult that abandons its perch, or hangs in a loose, sagging coil instead of tight loops, needs attention that day. Respiratory infection reads as open-mouth breathing, wheezing, or mucus at the nostrils, and it moves fast in damp, stagnant setups. Wrinkled skin and stuck shed flag dehydration. Any of these earns a reptile-vet visit now, not a week of watching.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual — when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.