



Emerald Tree Boas

Corallus caninus

ADVANCED · 5-6 FT ADULT · NOCTURNAL · ARBOREAL · NORTHERN SOUTH AMERICA

An emerald tree boa spends much of the day folded over a branch, then becomes an alert ambush hunter after dark. This South American snake needs stable conditions and room to move through a furnished canopy. The guide covers the northern emerald tree boa, *Corallus caninus*; the larger Amazon Basin species, *Corallus batesii*, needs care planned for its own size and requirements. [3,7]

AT A GLANCE

Basking perch	85 °F / 29 °C
Warm ambient	80-82 °F / 27-28 °C
Cool / night	75 °F / 24 °C
Humidity	80-90%; good ventilation
UVB (shade)	UVI 0.5-1.0; shaded retreats
Diet	Frozen/thawed whole rodents
Adult feeding	Every 2-4 weeks
Adult length	Usually 5-6 ft
Adult enclosure	72 x 24 x 48 in; see below



Coils rest on a branch by day; the snake becomes a patient hunter after dark. [3]

Photo: Habitat-OS

01

A Snake to Observe, with Minimal Handling

Choose an established captive-bred animal with a reliable feeding record. Keep routine handling brief and infrequent. **Never pull a boa from its perch or uncoil its tail by force.** Removable perches let you transfer the animal with its support when necessary. Young tails are particularly vulnerable to injury. A settled snake still needs space when feeding or feeling threatened; use long feeding tongs. [4]

02

Housing: Length, Height and Cover

House one boa per secure, ventilated enclosure. For a typical adult, use **72 x 24 x 48 inches** as a starting minimum, following ReptiFiles; larger animals need more length. Provide branches across several levels, with foliage and sheltered resting places. Established youngsters can use a well-furnished adult setup if food and water remain accessible. [1]

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Neonate	Fit to size	Secure cover	Use a feeding-established animal; easy water access. [4]
Juvenile	Fit to size	Adult setup	Established young can use furnished adult space. [1]
Subadult	Fit to size	Adult setup	Allow full extension and usable climbing routes. [1]
Adult	72x24x48	Larger	One animal; increase length for a larger individual. [1]

Inches, L x W x H. [1] supplies the adult minimum; no fixed juvenile minimum is claimed.

03

Measured Heat, Light & UVB

Aim for a warm ambient zone of 80-82 °F, a basking perch near 85 °F and a cooler retreat and night temperature around 75 °F. Thermostat-control heat and verify it with separate probes at the warm perch, middle and cool levels; prevent contact with heaters. Keep a regular 12-hour daylight period and darkness overnight. Provide low-intensity UVB using a shade-style setup: **UVI 0.5-1.0 at the snake's back**, with retreats near zero. Measure exposure with a UV meter; lamp, reflector, distance and mesh affect it. Follow the lamp maker's safe mounting guidance. [1,2,5]

04

Humidity, Airflow & Drinking Water

Maintain 80-90% relative humidity with cross-ventilation and hygrometer readings at more than one height. Keep humidity high while allowing wet surfaces to dry between misting sessions. Avoid stagnant air and a constantly soaked animal. Offer a clean water bowl within easy reach of a perch and replace its water daily. Misting should support drinking opportunities and moisture balance, without flooding the floor or leaving continuous condensation. [1,2,4,6]

05

Secure Perches and Daily Cleaning

Fit horizontal perches of several suitable diameters, including branches slightly narrower than the snake's thickest body section. Secure them against rotation or collapse and connect warmer and cooler resting places with climbing routes. Add foliage for visual cover. Inspect supports and remove feces, shed skin and uneaten prey promptly. Replace soiled substrate; a planted or bioactive enclosure still needs daily checks. Clean water bowls and misting equipment regularly. [5,6]

06

Small, Deliberate Meals

Offer properly thawed whole mice or rats using tongs; live rodents can injure the snake. Start young boas on meals about every 10-12 days and adults every 2-4 weeks, adjusting to growth, body condition and the animal's established routine. Choose modest prey appropriate to the individual; an eager feeding response does not mean another meal is needed. Record weight, meals and waste. Avoid unnecessary disturbance after feeding. If regurgitation occurs, seek a reptile veterinarian's advice before offering more food. [2,4,6,8]

07

Health Red Flags

Open-mouth breathing, nasal discharge, repeated regurgitation, weight loss or weakness need prompt reptile-veterinary assessment; **breathing difficulty is urgent**. Sunken eyes or loose skin can indicate dehydration. Bring temperature, feeding and weight records. These signs do not establish a diagnosis: avoid force-feeding or medication without veterinary direction. [8]

Sources (click): [1] ReptiFiles; [2] Chicago Exotics; [3] Cincinnati Zoo; [4] Steve Volk; [5] ETB Perches; [6] ETB Cleaning; [7] Basin species; [8] Merck Veterinary Manual. Original summary prepared for NARBC, September 2026.