



Fire Skink

Care Sheet

Caging needed: An adult skink can be kept in a tank as small as a 20 gallon long (30" x 12" x 12"), but no smaller. Glass or similar material types make the best enclosures. A 40 to 50 gallon tank is ideal, especially if housing a pair. Horizontal space is more important than vertical; however, fire skinks will climb and are actually quite good at it. Top the enclosure with a screen lid. Most essential to an active and happy skink is a well made enclosure. Plants, hides, logs, and the like will ensure a skink feels secure spending time on the surface.

Substrate: As a burrowing lizard, the proper substrate is critical. Ideally a mixture of materials like cypress mulch, coconut husk, sphagnum moss, and nutrient-free soil work very well. Leaf litter or moss as a top layer also proves helpful. The most important issue regarding substrate is that it remains moist. Substrate that gets too dry can create a risk of ingestion, poor sheds, or even respiratory infections.

Temperature and Lighting: A hot and cool end is preferable, with the ambient daytime temperature sitting at approximately 84 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit. The basking spot should reach a temperature between 92-96 degrees. Ideal nighttime temperatures should fall to about 70, but fire skinks will do fine with night time temperatures as low as 65. Provide an under-tank heater on the warm end. Dome lights are a good source for heat. For larger enclosures, side mounting heaters also work well. Never place a heat source directly in the enclosure. Fire skinks benefit from and require at least some UVA exposure. A simple 40 watt day bulb works well. Fire skinks can thrive without UVB light as long as they are receiving food dusted with calcium. During spring and summer months, a ten to twelve hour photo-period is required, dropping to an eight to ten hour photo-period in the cooler months. Humidity is most important in the substrate, which should always remain moist, ranging approximately 60% to 70% relative humidity. As long as humidity in the substrate remains at this range, the surface can drop as low as 40%. Misting thoroughly twice per day is usually sufficient.

Diet: Fire skinks benefit from a varied diet and are opportunistic feeders. Crickets make an excellent staple, and should be supplemented from time to time with other prey like mealworms, butterworms, silkworms, waxworms, or anything similar. Pinkie mice can be offered as an occasional treat, (no more than once per month). Fire skinks should be fed five to six insects every three days. Dust prey with calcium every third feeding. Seeing a fire skink in a water dish is rare, nevertheless offering a shallow one assures they can hydrate themselves and will help increase humidity. Most of their needs for hydration are met through their prey and their environment.

Misc: Males cannot live together and females cannot live together. If wanting to house two fire skinks they must be a male, female pair. A skink feeling both secure in its surroundings will display frequent activity on the surface of the enclosure. Fire skinks will tolerate handling and are usually docile; however, they are very fast and can prove squirmy. Any handling should always be done in a safe location where an escape will not occur.

Average size: 14- 15 inches long
Average lifespan: 15-20 years

