

# Blue-Tongue Skink

*Tiliqua Scincoides*

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Adult Size:	~20 inches, around eight of which is tail.
Life Span:	10 to 20 years in captivity.
Male/Female Differences:	There is no reliable way to sex juvenile skinks. Adult skinks are still quite difficult. Males tend to be bigger and thicker especially around the head and neck.
Compatibility:	Skinks can be housed together without fear of aggression, however the mating ritual of skinks can be quite aggressive. This occurs only once a year and pairs are completely compatible the rest of the year.
Origin:	Northern Australia
Climate:	Warm tropical or savannah.
Day Cycle:	Diurnal (awake during the day)
Temperature:	Mid 80's during the day, with a drop to the mid to low 70's at night.
Lighting:	Like all lizards, Blue-Tongue Skinks need a source of UVB in order to synthesize vitamin D and properly metabolize calcium.
Humidity:	Skinks appreciate moderate humidity. Light daily misting is excellent.
Habitat/Territory:	Woodlands, grasslands, and brushlands. They are ground dwellers and burrowers.
Substrate/Bedding:	Cypress Mulch (Bed-A-Brick) or wood chips provide the most natural environment. Cage carpets are also very effective and easy to keep clean.

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Hiding Place/Den:	Skinks are big burrowers and love artificial hiding places. These can be purchased premade or constructed yourself by stacking rocks or driftwood.
Cage Type:	10-20 gallon tanks are suitable for babies. Adults should be housed in 40 breeder tanks, or something of similar size and dimension, with a large amount of ground space.
Diet:	Skinks are true omnivores and should be fed a diet consisting of about 60% meat items (e.g. crickets, superworms, pinkie mice) and 40% plant items (e.g. dark leafy greens, berries are especially relished)
Supplements:	A calcium supplement should be provided, and a reptile vitamin containing vitamin D <sup>3</sup> .
Diet Precautions:	Do not feed frozen vegetables, as this can lead to thiamin deficiency. Do not overfeed vegetables high in phosphorus, such as broccoli, spinach, or kale.
Feeding:	The lizard should be fed every day. Most people find the most convenient way to be sure your lizard is getting all it needs is to alternate crickets one day with worms and greens the next.
Water Source:	The water bowl should be large, as skinks like to bathe in their water, and should be changed often, as they have a tendency to defecate in it.
Grooming:	Very little in the way of grooming is required. A weekly soak in tepid water would help to keep the lizard clean and hydrated.
Oral and Foot Care:	No special requirements.
Proper Handling:	Your skink should be scooped from underneath and behind, so as not to frighten it. It should be held firmly but gently with two hands.
Habitat Maintenance:	Remove feces and change water daily. Substrate should be changed every four to six weeks, or when it begins to smell.
Health Concerns:	Calcium deficiency or lack of proper lighting can lead to metabolic bone disease, characterized by soft, weak jaw or limbs, a slouched posture, inactivity, or refusal to feed.