



Gidgee Skink

Scientific name: *Egernia stokesii*

Biology and behaviour

Gidgee Skinks ranges from 10 to 12 inches in length with a stout body and rough edged scales, which are used to help minimize water loss. The tail is about 1/3 the actual size of the body, flat and has very strong spines that prevent the reptile from being dislodged while hiding within rock crevices. Their legs are well developed with five toes, however the fourth toe appears to be longer than the rest. The tongue is oval, flat and contains a mucus secreting membrane. The mucus allows the skink to keep hold of insects it catches. The body colour ranges from olive brown to reddish brown and some may have paler scales with dark edges. The underside side tends to have either white or a creamy yellow colouring. Gidgee Skinks live long lives; up to twenty-five years. The Gidgee Skink is a terrestrial species living within deep crevices or under boulders in the stony hills and mountain ranges of Australia. Sometimes they occupy hollow trees. The Gidgee skink populations remain steady at this time. Gidgee Skinks live in colonies of up to 16 individuals, a behaviour which is quite unique among lizards. They are diurnal active during the day and tend to be very secretive. Foraging and basking are done close to their dwellings and the security of rocky crevices. It has been found that Gidgee Skinks accumulate small piles of feces near their basking areas. It appears that a skink can differentiate between its own pile and that of another individual within the area. These fecal piles may be used to mark territories. They are also able to distinguish between kin and non-related individuals.

Housing

Should be 3 foot by 2 foot by 2 foot, as a substrate I would recommend reptile bark or synthetic grass mats. A large water dish and plenty of rocks and logs for them to hide under and around.

Temperature and Lighting

They require a 10.0 UV light, which is to be left on 6 – 8 hours a day to aid in bone formation of bones. The enclosure should be kept between 26 and 28°C, they require a basking point that should be placed over a rock this point should range between 30 – 35 °C and should be on while the UV light is on.

Feeding

Gidgee Skinks diet is primarily composed of spiders and insects such as grasshoppers and termites. In captivity a variety of insects is suggested.

Handling

Some will become accustomed to handling but most will not enjoy it and will bite when they feel threatened.