

Care & Information Sheet

Corn Snake

Elaphe guttata



Corn snakes come in a wide variety of colors due to captive breeding. They are popular pets and are known to be good climbers and escape artists. Corn snakes are named for the patterning of their belly scales that resembles maize, an ancestor of corn. The average size is 4-6 feet and with proper care and nutrition they can live up to 20 years.

Habitat

- Appropriate size tank with a secure cover to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise.
- Provide a hiding area just large enough for your snake to fit inside and a branch or shelf to climb on.
- Substrate – Aspen shavings, mulch-type commercial material, unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and barks or pelleted paper.
- Maintain humidity of 40 to 60%.
- Temperature gradient (85°F for the warm end and 70°F for the cool end) Radiant heat is recommended. Use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as a primary heat source and an undertank heater as a secondary source.
- Lighting – Snakes need a photoperiod light cycle; provide 8–12 hours of light daily. Do not leave white light on at all times.
- Clean the tank at least once a week. Place snake in a secure habitat, scrub tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution, rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach, dry tank and furnishings and add clean substrate.

Food & Water

- Thawed, appropriate size frozen rodents, warmed to room temperature.
- Feed most adult snakes every two weeks, or as needed. Feed juveniles once or twice a week.
- Feed in a separate tank so that your snake does not associate your hand or the cage being opened with feeding. Members of the same species may be housed together, but must be separated during feeding.
- **If feeding your snake live rodents, do not leave them unattended. Live rodents can injure the snake, sometimes fatally.**
- A snake's appetite may diminish during winter months.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water changed daily. Use a bowl large enough for the snake to soak in.

Grooming and Hygiene

- Corn snakes will regularly shed their skin. Ensure humidity of habitat is at an appropriate level to allow the snake to shed properly. To facilitate shedding, bathe snake in a large container that allows snake to immerse its entire body.
- As snakes get ready to shed, their eyes will turn a milky blue over the course of a few days and their body color will start to dull and develop a whitish sheen.

Supplies

Habitat with Screen Lid	Water Bowl	Under Tank Heater
Substrate	Incandescent Light or Ceramic Heater	Misting Bottle
Hiding Area & Driftwood	Thermometer & Humidity Gauge	Book about Snakes

Health

Because snakes are potential carriers of Salmonella and infectious diseases, always wash your hands before and after handling your snakes and or the habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

You should consult with an exotic animal veterinarian if you observe any of the following conditions.

- Dermatitis Blisters - Rapid shedding caused by an unclean habitat or one that is too cold or damp. Clean the cage and lower humidity.
- Respiratory Disease - Labored breathing. Mucus in mouth or nostrils. Can be caused by a habitat that is too cold or damp. Keep snake warm and dry.
- Stomatitis - White, cheesy substance in the mouth; loss of teeth and appetite. If untreated, can be fatal.
- Ticks and Mites - Parasites on skin, can transmit disease.

For information regarding snakes and disease, contact the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets>

NOTE: The information contained in this document is for general reference only. Please consult a veterinarian for medical advice and concerns.

Sources: Corn and Red Rat Snakes by Jerry Walls
Corn Snakes and Other Rat Snakes by R.D. Bartlett and P. Bartlett
Keeping and Breeding Snakes by Chris Mattison