

MOUNT PLEASANT HERPS

Breeding boas, pythons and colubrids

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Corn Snake Care Sheet

The *Elaphe guttata guttata*, aka the *Corn Snake*, is indigenous to North America, being found throughout the southeastern USA. The corn snake is one of the most popular of pet snakes being both docile and easily cared for. But what people notice most are the vast variety of beautiful patterns and striking colors now being bred in captivity through careful genetic selection. Choosing a reputable corn snake breeder will provide you with a robust and healthy hatchling that will become an interesting and beloved pet for decades.

Size and Lifespan

At hatching, corn snakes are only 6 to 12 inches in length. At a week of age, they shed and begin eating. At 4-5 years of age they reach their adult size of 4-6 feet in length. With proper care a corn snake can live up to 25 years!

Lighting and Temperature

No special lighting is required, though they do appreciate periods of light/dark. Avoid direct sun on the enclosure. Direct sun raises the temperature too high, quickly killing your snake.

Provide an enclosure temperature gradient of 75F to 85F on the bedding surface. Surface thermometers are best for giving accurate readings of your snake's environmental temperatures.

Caging and Substrate

* NOTE! ALWAYS PROVIDE A SECURE, ESCAPE-PROOF TOP! *

Hatchlings live comfortably in shoebox-sized enclosures until several months of age. As your snake grows, you will need to provide it with a larger living space. An adult corn snake can live comfortably in an enclosure the size of 20-gallon long aquarium. Providing "hides" for your corn snake is essential. Hides are things such as a cave or hollow log.

We highly recommend shredded aspen bedding. It absorbs and evaporates liquids better. It smells good and keeps your snake smelling good through its odor absorbing powers! Snakes love it for its tunnel holding capacity.

Feed and Water

We recommend feeding frozen / thawed mice of the appropriate size for your snake. Feed one mouse that is no more than 50% larger around than your snake. It is better to feed less, more often than to feed more, less often. Captive snakes are very sedentary and so have a greater chance of indigestion causing regurgitation, which can be costly to their health.

Frozen mice can be thawed in a glass jar using very hot water and several water changes. Fully thawed mice are warm and squishy. Quickly roll the thawed mouse on a paper towel to dry it and then feed it to your snake while still nice and warm.

Frequency of feeding is individualized. Generally, snakes are fed every 7-14 days. Maintain your snake neither skinny with an obvious spine, nor fat with a valley along its spine. Over time, you'll learn how often your snake needs to be fed.

Provide a tip-free water bowl large enough for your snake to soak in. Maintain clean water, checking it at least daily.

Handling and Temperament

With repeated short introductions, respectful of individual temperaments, all snakes can come to enjoy handling and excursions outside of their enclosure. When handling a snake, support its weight to prevent dangling. Adult snakes instinctively know to wrap to prevent falling. Young snakes do not! They will slip and fall off! Handle them carefully giving them time to learn about being handled and to discover that interacting with you is safe and interesting.

Always avoid handling your snake during the two days following feeding.

REPTILES CAN CARRY ORGANISMS THAT MAY CAUSE ILLNESS IN PEOPLE. ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER HANDLING A REPTILE OR CLEANING ITS ENCLOSURE. DISPOSE OF REPTILE ITEMS OR SOILED BEDDING WHERE NO OTHER CREATURES CAN ACCESS IT.