



Corn Snake

Corn snakes are one of the most commonly kept snakes. They are attractively marked in various colors with a checkerboard pattern on the belly. Adults reach 3-5 feet long and have an easy-going temperament. Corn snakes are mostly nocturnal and hide during the day.

General

Snakes often need several days to become comfortable with strangers. Always support the body and allow the head freedom to move about. Your snake's skin will become tight as it grows and will periodically shed to reveal new skin below. Bluish-white eyes and dull skin indicate it will shed soon. Once the eyes have cleared, help your snake finish shedding by soaking it in luke warm water.

Housing

A 10-gallon aquarium with a tight lid is fine for a baby corn snake. Adults need a long 20 gallon aquarium. Newspaper, paper towels, or Astro-turf can be used on the bottom of the enclosure. Hiding spots will help your pet feel secure. A temperature gradient of 70 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit on the cool end of the enclosure and 82 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit on the warm end will allow the snake to regulate its own body temperature. Use a reptile heat lamp on top of the screen cage lid at one end and an undertank heating pad under just half of the tank! Place the heat lamp far enough away from your pet to avoid burning it.

Diet

Only feed pre-killed prey to avoid injuries. Thaw frozen prey thoroughly before feeding. A hatchling can be offered a "pinkie" mouse every few days. Increase the amount and size of prey slowly as the snake's appetite and ability to swallow increase. A fully grown snake may be eating a fully-grown mouse once every 7-10 days. Do not handle your snake for at least 2 days after feeding. Include a sturdy bowl filled daily with fresh, clean water large enough for your snake to soak in.

Cleaning

Clean cage weekly and water bowl every other week with a bleach solution (1% c. bleach/1 gallon water) to eliminate both bacteria and fungus. Rinse well and dry thoroughly. Remove all waste and wet substrate as quickly as possible to prevent the growth of fungi and bacteria. If your snake soils the water, clean and replace the bowl immediately.

Health

Get a routine fecal exam done by a qualified reptile veterinarian. Watch for signs of illness like lack of appetite, listlessness, frequent regurgitation, mucous from the nose or mouth; change in feces or urine; parasites, such as ticks or mites, or wrinkled skin around the neck, indicating dehydration.

Warning

Never use "hot rocks" for your snake, as they can cause serious burns.