

Corn Snake Care Sheet

By: Curious Creatures LLC

This document is for guidance only and should not be used as the sole source of information. New information is being developed regularly. It is recommended to find multiple sources of information before buying a pet.

Common Name: Corn Snake, Red Rat Snake

Scientific Name *Elaphe guttata guttata*

Native to: : Mid – Atlantic and Southeastern United States (from the Pine Barrens of New Jersey to the upper Keys of Florida)

Size Range: 3 - 5 Feet

Life Span: 20-30 years

General appearance: Corn snakes are a slender snake with black bordered, irregular red or rust colored dorsal blotches. Background color can range from brilliant orange to silvery gray. The belly is white with a black checkerboard pattern. The body scales are smooth to weakly keeled and the sub-caudal scales are divided. *Note - because of the trend to strive for odd color and pattern morphs in captivity, many strains of captive produced corn snakes vary in appearance from the above described traits. For example, blood red corns lack the checkerboard ventral pattern and striped corns possess dorsal stripes instead of blotches.

Enclosure: A 10-to-20-gallon tank will work best for babies and juveniles for the first few years. Adults will require a 40 gallon (36x18x18) tank minimum.

Temperature: Ambient air temperature should range between 78* - 82°F *Note - Many sub - adult and adult corn snakes will voluntarily cease feeding during the cool winter months. This coincides with their natural winter dormant period. If the snake refuses food for two to three weeks during the winter and appears otherwise healthy, the temperature in the enclosure may be allowed to drop to the mid 60's F for one to three months. If breeding is desired, this dormant period appears to increase fertile egg production.

Heat/Light: As stated earlier, corn snakes require a supplemental hot spot to adequately digest food and remain active. They should be provided with a heat pad or

overhead incandescent light that will provide an area of about 1/3 of the enclosure that achieves a temperature of 88 - 92 F. Hot rocks are unstable and often get far too hot, therefore unless they are connected to a rheostat, which will control the temperature, they are not recommended.

Substrate: Paper towel, newspaper, butcher paper, indoor/outdoor carpeting, are great for babies to juveniles, while aspen shavings, repti-bark and cypress mulch work for older specimens. Avoid any cedar based wood shavings, as they exude irritating and possibly toxic.

Humidity: Corn Snakes require 30% - 50% humidity. You can spray the cage lightly on the hot side, or set up a humid hide filled with moss. A corn snake should NEVER be kept wet and cold.

Handling: One of the most exciting parts about having a pet snake is being able to handle him or her if you choose to. While corn snake can certainly be held, take time to establish a bond of trust with your snake before simply reaching in and grabbing it. Corn snakes are very wiggly and active animals, so make sure to support your snake.

Diet: Hatchlings can start feeding on xs mice pinkies. Juveniles and adults can gradually take larger prey of mice, adult mice or young rats all the way up to small rats. Young snakes can be fed once a week, while adults can be fed bi-weekly.

Corn Snakes should have a water bowl big enough to soak in.

Maintenance: Spot clean the cage as needed. Full cage clean every 6 months or so. Water bowls should be changed if dirty and washed thoroughly once to twice a week.