

# CORN SNAKE - CARE SHEET

## *Elaphe Guttata*

The corn snake is native to the woodlands and rocky hillsides of Central America up to North Mexico. It normally grows between 3 and 5 feet.

They are quite placid snakes and will become tame with regular handling. They are an ideal first snake.

When choosing your first snake you will have to decide as to whether you would like to start with a hatchling or a yearling. Breeders normally sell on hatchling snakes as soon as they have shed their skin and taken their first food. This can be anything from 3 to 10 days, so hatchlings can be very young.

### **Housing**

A 30" x 15" x 15" vivarium should be big enough to house up 1 corn snake. Obviously the more corns you keep the bigger the vivarium you will need. Corns are nocturnal and do not need special lighting. For the size of the tank stated a 60 watt coloured light bulb with guard should be enough to provide the temperatures required through the day, which is, 78 - 88 degrees Fahrenheit and dropping five or ten degrees lower for the night time temperature. You will need to be able to regulate the heat by using either a dimmer thermostat or a dimmer switch. A thermometer placed inside the tank is essential to make sure the temperature is maintained.

Corns like to hide up during the day so make sure that you put enough dark hide areas in the tank. Use rocks, logs and artificial plants, these are ideal. Make sure to put a rock or stone underneath the basking area as the heat will be absorbed by the stone and will make a nice warm place for the snake when it is active during the night.

Make sure to keep a fresh supply of water in a sturdy drinking bowl for the snake. You might find that some snakes use the water to defecate so it is advisable to change it on a daily basis.

Provide several areas for the snake to climb on.

### **Feeding**

It is advisable to feed snakes mice that have been frozen and thawed. Live mice can do a lot of damage to a snake.

How often and the number of mice fed depend upon the size of the snake. Hatchlings should have a pinkie (day old mice) about every 4 days but if they remain hungry then feed them two. As the snake grows older you should increase the size of the mouse and extend the feeding period so that eventually as an adult they will be fed weekly. Corn snakes cannot be overfed.

Whilst young, corn snakes shed their skin quite often. You will notice that they will be due to shed by the blue cast over their eyes; once this has cleared they will shed within a few days. You may also find that they will go off their food before a shed as well. Once they have completed their shedding they will return to eating properly.

### **General Information**

If you are keeping more than one snake in a vivarium then separate them when it comes to feeding time. This will stop them fighting for the food. Once they have eaten you are able to put them back into the tank together. Captive bred corn snakes come in a variety of colours.