

Corn Snake (Elaphe Guttata)

General Information

Corn Snakes belong to the genus *Elaphe* and are found in forests, hillsides and farm areas all over the United States of America. They have also been reported in Mexico and even the Cayman Islands. These are a very popular snake and freely available



for purchase from a variety of suppliers. One of the reasons for this is possibly due to the fact that captive bred Corn Snakes are offered in a great many exotic colours and patterns. Regrettably, recent news would indicate that there are sometimes problems with these more 'exotic' types due to the intense inbreeding required to

achieve the colour mutations. As a result, Corn Snakes are exhibiting early mortality issues as a result of the adverse genes that are included along with the ones for colour and pattern.

Brief overview of needs

For Corn Snakes to remain healthy, they must be kept at temperatures between 75-85 F. Providing a thermal gradient (warmer at one end than at the other), is required also. Keeping reptiles at the correct temperature is also essential for these animals to digest their food. Bear in mind that you can allow temperatures to fall into the lower range at night. Above all, don't guess the temperature; use a thermometer. Corn Snakes are most active at



night or during dawn and dusk and this could possibly be the best time to feed them. Whilst they are primarily ground-dwellers, there are some that are semi-arboreal, so

check on the species. If you have any of the climbers, it may be an idea to put a stout branch in the enclosure for those that require it. As is always the case, ensure that the enclosure that you purchase or construct is as escape proof as you can possibly buy or make. Considering the point made earlier, if it is semi-arboreal, then aim to have an enclosure that is tall enough to house a branch. With Corn Snakes, as with all other species you will have wonderfully adept escape artists. Make certain that the accommodation is free from gaps and any other possible escape routes!

Finally

Allow a snake a day or two to settle in to its new enclosure, but don't leave it any longer than that. Snakes will probably move away from you as you try to pick them up, even if they have been handled before. This is normal. Be gentle, be persistent and avoid sudden movements. Regular handling is needed for the animal to get used to being picked up and moved. Remember also that most snakes will take exception to being handled shortly after feeding and will possibly regurgitate under these circumstances.