



Corn Snakes

Elaphe guttata guttata

Corn snakes, also known as red rat snakes, are usually considered one of the easiest snake species to keep in captivity. They make excellent pets due to the fact that they are easy to care for and are almost always docile and friendly toward humans. Corn snakes are currently being bred in an incredible number of color and pattern morphs, and attain lengths of 3.5-4.5 feet. They are native to the southeastern United States, and prefer habitats such as overgrown fields, forest openings, and abandoned or seldom used buildings where their favorite food of mice and other small rodents is abundant.



Adult wild-type corn snake

Basic Care:

Habitat: Hatchling corn snakes can be maintained in terrariums of 5-10 gallons, with adults doing well in cages equivalent to 20 gallons or larger. They are resourceful escape artists so be sure the cage you get has a secure and tight fitting lid. Substrate can be as simple as paper towel or newspaper (recommended especially for young snakes), to aspen shavings, reptile carpet, or recycled paper litter. A water dish large enough for the snake to soak in should be available at all times. They will appreciate cage furnishings they can climb on, and at least two separate hides should be provided, one on the warm and one on the cool side of the cage. Corn snakes prefer daytime basking temperatures in the mid 80's, and a temperature gradient into the mid 70's should be provided. Temperatures can drop into the low 70's at night. Heat can be provided with standard heat lamps or pads, or a combination of the two.

Diet: Corn snakes should be maintained on a diet of appropriately-sized rodents. Hatchling snakes should be fed a single newborn (pink) mouse every 4-7 days, while juveniles and adults can go 1-2 weeks between feedings. Adults will generally eat 1-3 adult mice per feeding, depending on size. Most corns will accept pre-killed or frozen/thawed rodents readily. If the snake is normally kept on a particulate substrate, it is recommended to feed them in a separate cage or container to prevent them from swallowing substrate while eating.