

Just Snakes.....



Corn-Snake Care-Sheet

Corn-snakes come from North America and can reach a length of 5' but their bodies are relatively slim approx. 1 to 2 " diameter.

Until they are two years old the vivarium size need be no larger than 18' square. This home must have ventilation but no hole big enough for the baby snake to escape from, most first problems arise from snakes escaping. They sometimes escape by pushing between the two glass doors so check that there isn't room for the snake to escape, that way. Dry wood-chipping substrate from pet shops is OK for bedding, this can be spot cleaned for about two months or until you think the whole lot needs throwing out and start with fresh. There are recommended cleansing fluids available from reptile shops, some pet shops and from Veterinary Surgeries.

Dependant on their appetite and growth rate a new home would probably be needed in about 2 to 3 years. The smallest vivarium needed when the snake is about 5 years old would be approx. 3' x 18" x 18".

It would be necessary especially whilst the snake is young to have a heat-mat placed underneath the vivarium but with an airspace which means putting the viv. on top of two small plinths either side to lift it a little so that it does not rest on the mat. Alternatively you could stick the mat onto the side or the back of the viv. With packing tape. There are other forms of heating equipment, which although more expensive are safer, as heatmats can be a fire hazard (they are not supposed to be left on indefinitely). .

A Habistat temperature regulator is also a good idea although not absolutely necessary, no extra light is necessary if the snake is in a normally lit room, light bulbs also give off heat so the vivarium may become too hot and a snake can wrap itself around an unprotected bulb and burn itself. A thermometer (preferably digital) is necessary to keep an eye on the temperature which should be approx 75f-80f in Summer cooling to 55f-65f in the Winter

The baby snakes will eat 1 to 2 pinky mice every week. As the snake grows you need to increase the size of the food to fuzzie mice and then full grown mice, an adult snake can eat 3 to 4 mice in one go, but less often these can be bought frozen and I would always advise to defrost at room temperature, not to use a microwave. You can also buy vitamin supplements from the sources already mentioned.

When the snake is adult, the feeding will not be so regular, once every 10 days or less in some cases, the food can be offered, but do not worry if the snake does not eat, a snake can go without food for up to four months. Only be concerned if the snake *looks* under the weather.

Some snakes will still eat even when going into a slough (skin shed) most will not. You will know when the snake is going to shed, first its eyes go grey and milky and the skin becomes duller or darker, once you notice this, leave the snake alone because they can become grumpy at this time.

Other times handle the snake as much as possible this will make it sociable, *except* when it has just eaten, as it may regurgitate (be sick), leave the snake a few days to rest after its meal. Clean water must always be available, a bowl large enough for the snake to bathe in if it wants. I try, always, to give my snakes two bowls, one for bathing and a smaller one for drinking.



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All snakes have different personalities and different needs some like to bathe some don't much, some like a damper environment so it can be a good idea to give the snake a small box, with its lid, but with a hole cut into the lid big enough for the snake to go in. with some damp peat and moss, this will probably be appreciated when the snake is in slough (skin shedding).

By the 2nd or 3rd year the snake will become sexually mature.

A female may go off her food for a couple of weeks in the Spring-time and yet look bigger, after a skin shed it will seem extremely active trying to get out of the viv. A box with damp sand (budgie sand) peat or vermiculite with damp moss on top (Homebase or B&Qs) will make her happy she will lay eggs within a week or so, then will shed again before eating. (She will not lay eggs regularly if she has had no contact with a male, but may lay unfertilised eggs out of the blue). If the snake is male it may also be very active hoping to find a female. (you may have to try the nest business before you know whether it is male or female).

As the snake grows older *a male snake* will often go without food for two months or more, in the Winter, don't worry. But if you do, you can always ring me.

If you keep two snakes together never feed them together, an awful accident can happen where both snakes go for the same food.

Never touch the mice with your fingers and then place your mouse smelling finger near the snake, it will probably think your finger is the mouse and bite it by mistake. Always use tweezers or some other tool to pick up the mice.

It can be a good idea to keep a separate container for feeding the snake, as it will get used to this idea and never think that a finger is the mouse coming into its house

Mites can sometimes appear on your snake, the eggs are as small as dust so they can be picked up in reptile shops or anywhere where there are other snakes. If you notice your snake lying in it's water bowl all the time, it is trying to drown the mites and you will notice the little black insects on it's body and in the water. Put the snake overnight in a box, with a lid and airholes, half full of tepid water (refer to viv temps) put a smear of vegetable oil on the snakes nose as the mites can migrate there but cannot live in oil. Clean the viv with reputable cleansing fluid, pour boiling water over the furniture in the viv i.e. the bowl, bark etc. Then replace everything including the snake, the next day. Continue to keep an eye on your snake as these insects suck their blood, can make the snake very ill and even kill it.

Keep a look out in the shop where you buy your mice, as this is the most common place to pick them up

If your snake brings up it's food (regurgitation) don't feed it again for two weeks as it's stomach will be sore and it could make the snake ill.

all the best *Snakey Sue*

P.S. Always try to imagine how you would feel in the same circumstance as the snake, e.g. left all alone for days without sensing anything different, no wind, rain, sunshine. They can be very sensitive to the slightest movement or vibration and become nervous, without stimulation.

