



## Corn Snake *Pantherophis guttata*

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- Also known as the Red Rat snake, corn snakes are a medium sized colubrid native to the Southeastern United States.
- Light orange, tan, to beige ground color with deeper reddish-orange dorsal blotches outlined in black. Arrowhead pattern on back of the head. Has a black and white checkered belly.
- Corn snakes are widely produced in many captive bred color and pattern cultivars known as “morphs”.
- If provided the proper care, corn snakes can attain longevity of 15-20 years or more.

### **Size**

Ranges from 5-10 inches as hatchlings, and 3-5 feet (36-54 inches) for most adults.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling corn snakes can be housed in a 10-15 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult corn snakes should be housed in a minimum of a 20-30 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Corn snakes will thrive on a substrate of newspaper, cage liner material, aspen or Sani Chip shavings, or cypress mulch. Do not use pine or cedar shavings, as these substrates are toxic to snakes. Provide a water bowl or dish and a hide box at all times in the enclosure. Artificial foliage, driftwood, and other cage furnishings can provide additional security.

Create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Overhead, incandescent lighting can also be used, but is not required for corn snakes (which are primarily nocturnal). Ideal temperatures for corn snakes range from 75-80 degrees F on the cool side and 84-88 degrees F on the warm side.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least once per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

### **Feeding/Diet**

In the wild, corn snakes will prey upon rodents and other small mammals, and small birds and bird eggs. Hatchlings and juveniles will occasionally feed on frogs or small lizards.

Most hatchlings can be started off on pinkie mice every 3-5 days. Food items can gradually be increased as needed. Most adult corn snakes can be fed adult mice once every 5-7 days. A general rule of thumb to follow when feeding snakes is to provide prey items that are approximately the same width as the widest point of the snake.

### **Handling**

As with many snakes, hatchling and juvenile corn snakes may initially be nervous and defensive. Corn snakes may rattle their tails, musk or defecate, or bite when alarmed. Handle your corn snake gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. Most corn snakes will become more tolerant and accustomed to handling as they become older.

\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\*