

Corn Snakes; *Pantherophis guttatus* (*Elapha guttata*)



Adult size; 1.5 m (5')

Origin; USA

Temperature; 30°C to 25°C (86°F to 77°F)

Longevity; 15 years

Corn snakes are a popular pet snake due to their generally docile disposition. They are extremely variable in both colour and patterns. Plus readily available

Housing

Corn snakes require different size enclosures at different stages throughout their life. Housing a young snake in a large enclosure can make the corn snake display signs of aggression due to them not feeling secure. A suitable size vivarium for adult corn snake would be 914.4 mm x 355.6 mm x 431.8 mm (36 inches x 14 inches x 17 inches) Although there is no harm in providing a slightly larger vivarium if possible.

Substrate

There are a number of different substrate available for use with corn snakes. Aspen, ligncel, beech chips, Hemp and bark chips. Avoid aromatic woods such as pine. Newspaper and reptile carpet are also suitable; however the corn snake will tend to sit under these substrates.

Temperature and Lighting

Corn snakes cannot make their own body heat so they rely on their environment, basking under a heat source to warm up or moving away from the heat source to cool down. Heat is required not only for them to keep warm but it is critical for their digestion. Too high or too low of a temperature can cause a loss of appetite, a weakened immune system, slower growth rate and possible health problems.

Corn snakes should have a basking area of 28°C to 32°C (82.4F to 90°F) with a gradient of 24°C to 25°C (75°F to 77°F) at the cool end. One of the best way to achieve this is using a ceramic heat bulb attached to a thermostat so that the temperature can be controlled. There are lots of different thermostats on the market so make sure you have the right style for your heat emitter. There is a selection of different types of heating equipment which can be used within corn snake enclosures. The best way to check that your heating equipment is holding the temperatures is by using thermometers at different points within the vivarium. Any heat bulb should have a guard fitted to prevent your corn snake coming in contact with the bulb.

It is not essential to provide lighting with in a corn snakes enclosure, however many owners do so to aid viewing of their corn snakes. Any lighting that is provided should be fixed securely in place. Any spot bulbs should be guarded to safe guard the corn snake.

Decor

This is an area of real personal preference, just bear in mind that your corn snake will need strong secure surfaces to climb on as it grows. Last thing you would want is it to fall and injury your corn snake. Item commonly seen in corn snake vivariums are; Natural wood, cork bark, bamboo roots, pebbles, rocks. Live plants are not really advisable as corn snakes as they tend to kill them by climbing on them and breaking the steams.

Diet

Corn snakes in the wild would have a mixed diet consisting of rodents, other reptiles, amphibians, small birds and eggs. Most captive corn snakes are fed on defrosted rodents. The size of the rodent will vary depending on the size of the snake. When feeding we aim to provide a food size which leaves a visible bodge in the main body of the snake when swallowed. Most corn snake fed once every 7 to 10 days.

Water

Fresh water should be available in a heavy bowl which ideally is large enough for the snake to submerge its whole body. Water should be changed on a daily basis to ensure it fresh and preventing any bacteria build up.