

# CAL ZOO'S REFERENCE SHEET

## CORNSNAKES

|            |                        |                       |                |
|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Latin name | Elaphe guttata guttata | Maximum length        | 4 - 6 feet.    |
| Native to  | United States          | Approximate life span | 10 - 15 years. |

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Cornsnakes have remained one of the most popular snakes by beginners and experienced reptile keepers alike. Their gentle nature, ease of care and affordable price are the main reasons. Another reason: there is a wide variety of captive bred color morphs available. In fact, there is probably a larger selection of differing color morphs with Cornsnakes than any other reptile. Regular, albino, snow, ghost, motley, okeetee, zig-zag and black are just a few examples. Interestingly, with all these color varieties, all Cornsnakes are classified under the same Latin name no matter how different they look.

### ENCLOSURE

10 gallon or larger sized aquarium is adequate for babies. Rule of thumb: The snake should never be more than twice as long as it's enclosure. Provide climbing branches and hiding places.

### SUBSTRATE

For substrates there are a variety of choices. For any of them start with a layer of news paper for easy clean up and extra absorption. On top of that use a Zoo Med REPTI™ CAGE CARPET, pine shavings or the newspaper by itself.

### TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Cornsnakes occur naturally in the southeastern quarter of the United States. They prefer temperatures at night between 75 - 80°F and a daytime temperature of 80 - 85°F.

### HEATING

Use a Zoo Med REPTITHERM® UNDER TANK HEATER (U.T.H.). Do not turn the tank heater off, leave it on 24 hours a day and use it in conjunction with a Zoo Med RHEOSTAT™ for easy heat control. Or use a Zoo Med CERAMIC HEAT EMITTER with a Zoo Med RHEOSTAT™.

### LIGHTING

High UVB levels are not necessary for Cornsnakes. A Zoo Med REPTISUN 2.0 bulb will work fine. With it's high UVA levels, your Cornsnake will show it's colors well. All reptiles and amphibians need a photo period. A plug in timer (for your lights only, do not use a timer for your heating devices) works well to develop a regular photo period (light cycle) of 8 - 10 hours of light, 14 - 16 hours of darkness. Reptiles and amphibians cannot see the red light spectrum, so a red bulb is ideal for nighttime viewing of your Cornsnake.

### FOOD & WATER

Cornsnakes will eat pinkie mice as babies and gradually move up to adult mice and baby rats. Feed all snakes separate. Remove them from their enclosure, place them in a secure container with their food. Be sure the container has good ventilation. Place the container in a warm area. Do this preferably before you go to bed. Snakes like it to be quiet and calm when they eat. Don't expect the snake to go immediately over to the food and start eating. (Although this may happen, it's not the norm). It is not recommended to feed snakes in their enclosures. They will become conditioned to respond in a "hunger-mode". They will think there's food coming and may bite. This is not an aggressive behavior. They are acting on instinct. If, every time you opened the enclosure, you reached in and picked up your snake, instead of dropping food in, it would realize food is not approaching. Feed Cornsnakes once every week. When feeding weaned mice, it's always best to feed pre-killed mice to avoid severe bites to your snake. Never handle snakes after handling rodents. The scent on your hands may invite a bite.

### NOTES

Always wash your hands before and immediately after handling reptiles and amphibians. Never leave live food long term with reptiles & amphibians. They can inflict severe harm, even kill your pet. If your animals take some time to eat or you feed them at night, leave a slice of potato, carrot or dry dog food for the live food items to eat. Your local pet shop is an ideal source for reptile and amphibian related books and supplies. Please make sure you read and become familiar with any instructions provided with reptile support products you may purchase. For further information on reptiles and amphibians we recommend you read *REPTILES MAGAZINE* and *THE VIVARIUM*. California Zoological Supply hopes you have enjoyed reading this reference sheet on Cornsnakes. We hope that our guidelines will assist you with the care or possible purchase of your new pet.

This sheet may be copied in its entirety only.