



Dragonz N' Cornz

Randy & Stephanie Hays
www.dragonzncornz.com
stephanie@dragonzncornz.com

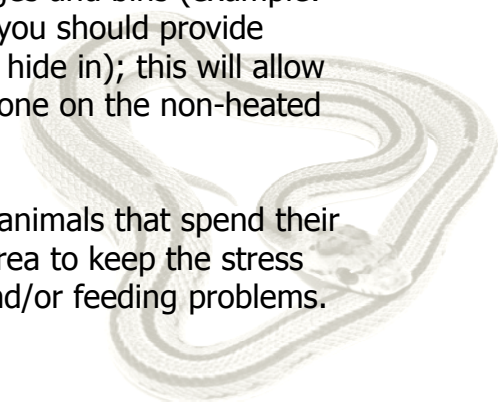
Corn Snakes (Pantherophis Guttatus) Care Sheet

Corn Snakes (genus Pantherophis Guttatus) are one of the most popular of the smaller snakes available. They're extremely affordable and available in an amazing selection of colors and patterns (with selective breeding the options continue to expand). They typically only grow from 2.5' to 5'. They're docile, hearty, and easy to feed and care for. Their average lifespan is 15-20 years. Corn Snakes are fun for the beginning hobbyist to the experienced Herpetologist.

Here are a few things you should know when you bring a baby Corn Snake home. He/She will be scared. It's best to put them into their enclosure and leave them alone for a couple of days. This allows them to become acclimated to the sights and smells of their new home. After the first week, it's ok to hold him/her for a short period of time (10-15 minutes). Make sure you keep the length of time you handle the new snake brief, as it will take a few weeks for them to get fully acclimated.

Housing: Corn Snakes are excellent escape artists so having the proper enclosure is critical for their health and safety. The basic rule for sizing: make sure the length of the snake does not exceed the length + width of the enclosure. The enclosure needs to have a secure lid, preferably one that latches when it's closed, and allows for air circulation. Popular enclosures include glass aquariums, melamine cages and bins (example: Sterilite, Rubbermaid, Iris). If you use an overly large enclosure for a small snake, you should provide additional hides (for example a toilet paper roll or small cereal box your snake can hide in); this will allow them to feel more secure. Ideally you should have one hide on the warm side and one on the non-heated side of the enclosure.

Location: Placement of the enclosure is important. Snakes are naturally secretive animals that spend their days hiding from predators. We recommend placing the enclosure in a low traffic area to keep the stress level low. If a snake is stressed from not feeling secure it can lead to aggression and/or feeding problems.





Dragonz N' Cornz

Randy & Stephanie Hays
www.dragonzncornz.com
stephanie@dragonzncornz.com

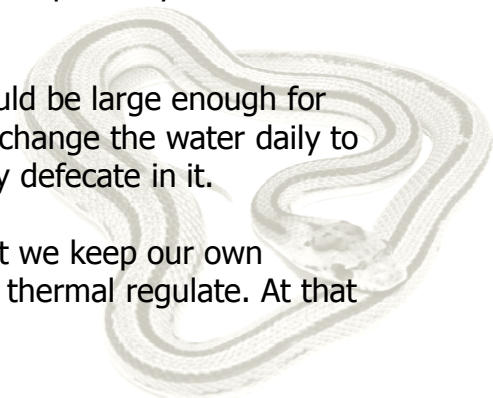
Substrate: I use paper towels. It allows me to do a quick clean whenever necessary. However, you can use aspen, newspaper, or CareFresh bedding. We do not recommend using pine (as it contains toxic oils), or sand (as it can get stuck in their nostrils leading to respiratory problems). A full cleaning of the enclosure is recommended monthly.

Heat: Corn Snakes are cold blooded animals that need to have a heated source in their environment to thermo-regulate (control their body temperature). If there is not sufficient heat available, they can not digest their food properly. A heat gradient (a gradual increase of heat from the cool side to the warm side) in the enclosure is ideal at 75F to 85F. This allows the snake to find the temp they desire to feel comfortable. The type of heat you provide is dependant on the type of enclosure you decide to use. The easiest methods to use are under tank heaters or heat tape. Under tank heaters are basically a heating pad that is placed under the enclosure. They are usually only a few watts and provide a constant temperature. Make sure you purchase one that is specifically made for reptiles. Heat Tape is the same "basic" product as the under tank heater, but requires a thermostat or rheostat to control the temperature. We recommend using heat on only one side of the enclosure to ensure you acquire a proper heat gradient. **Note: Never use Heat Rocks for reptiles, they tend to overheat and can severely burn your reptile.**

Lighting: Corn Snakes do not require any specialized lighting. Normal ambient light is perfectly fine. Just maintain a natural light cycle (day time/night time) as they don't have eye lids.

Water: Corn snakes should always have access to clean water. The water dish should be large enough for the snake to get their entire body in and submerge. We recommend you clean and change the water daily to avoid any bacteria build up. You will want to change their water immediately if they defecate in it.

Humidity: Corn Snakes typically live comfortable at the same level of humidity that we keep our own environment. They might seek higher levels during the shedding process or to help thermal regulate. At that time they will usually soak in their water bowl.





Dragonz N' Cornz

Randy & Stephanie Hays
www.dragonzncornz.com
stephanie@dragonzncornz.com

Multiples: We recommend keeping only one single snake per enclosure. This allows you to easily monitor each animal. This will help you keep track of which one shed, defecated, ate etc.

Meals: Most baby Corns will typically eat pinky mice for their first 6 months. After which time they will likely move up to a fuzzy mouse. At about a year they will probably be eating hoppers. After a year and a half to two years they will start eating adult mice. Never feed them anything that is more than 1 ½ times the thickness of the thickest part of their body. You can feed babies every 3-5 days. Adults can be fed every 7-14 days. For safety reasons we recommend you feed frozen/thawed mice or rats. It reduces issues with mice biting or injuring your snake during feeding. Frozen/thawed are also more cost effective and much more convenient. Check out our links page for recommended feed suppliers.

Sheds: Corn snakes shed their outer layer of skin as they grow. As the new skin is revealed the colors are vibrant. If the housing is setup right they should not need anything to help with the shedding process. The skin should come off in one piece. If the shed does not come off in one piece, it typically indicates that there was a lack of humidity in the enclosure (especially common when using heat lamps) during the shedding process. To raise the humidity during the shedding process you can place a moist (not dripping) paper towel in one of the hide boxes. You can also mist the enclosure or place some moist Sphagnum Moss (available in plant and pet stores) in a small Tupperware style container with a hole cut in it (so the snake can get in and out). If you are using sphagnum moss run it under luke warm or room temperature water, wring out and place in the hide. Watch for the snakes eyes to turn milky or cloudy, when this happens the shedding process is starting... use one of these methods to increase the moisture until the shedding process is complete.

This information is not intended to cover everything. An additional reference we recommend for Corn snakes is reading "Corn Snakes, The Comprehensive Owners Guide," by Kathy Love. It's available on Amazon and in most book stores.

