



## Jungle Fever Care Sheet

### Corn Snake

*This care sheet has been developed by the proprietor through research and personal experience. It is intended to provide information on initial set up and the care that your pet will require. For more in depth advice and information please do*

*not hesitate to discuss your pet further with the staff of Jungle Fever or purchase a specific species book available at Jungle Fever.*

**Common Name:** Pantherophis Guttatus

**Introduction:** Corn snakes have been one of the most popular species of snake for those who wish to keep them in captivity. They are particularly suited to the beginner. This is primarily due to their placid natures and relatively low maintenance requirements. There are a myriad of colour and pattern morphs available and still being created.

**Natural Origination:** South Eastern USA and North Eastern Mexico

**Life Span:** 15 to 30 Years

**Adult Size:** 4 to 5 foot on average

**Housing:** The most important thing to consider when buying or building an enclosure for your corn snake is that it is escape proof. It is amazing how small a gap a corn snake can fit through and they can be rather Houdini-Like.

**Size:** It is worth considering the size a snake can reach into adulthood when considering housing options for a hatchling. Hatchlings will happily live in a small enclosure; however, they will grow to adult size within 2 to 3 years and, at that stage, will need a Vivarium of around 3ft in length to allow them enough room to move around freely.

**FURNISHINGS:** Always make sure the furnishings are secure and won't topple over and hurt or kill your animal. Large rocks or branches need to be secured.

A corn snake is, by nature, a rather shy creature and this is the main point to take into consideration when furnishing the habitat. "Hides" should be provided that are large enough for the snake to fit into but not too large that they do not feel protected. If at all possible, there should be two hides in the vivarium; one at the warm end and one at the cooler end. This will allow them to move within

temperature gradients and still feel secure. The most important piece of “furniture” for the corn snake home is the water bowl. This should be a solid construction and sturdy enough that a strong corn snake is not able to topple it over. Corn snakes like to roam around in the evenings and this is when you will find them at their most active. They are very agile and adept climbers. If you would like to see your corn snake at its best then providing something for it to climb over such as a branch or ornament would prove beneficial.

**UV LIGHTING:** Corn snakes do not require UV lighting.

**Heat:** Corn snakes are cold blooded and do require a temperature gradient within their enclosure to enable to thermo regulate to aid their digestion. The temperature range should be between 70F to 85F (20C to 30C). This is easily achieved by use of the many heating and thermostat products available. One of the cheaper options is use of a heat mat. This should be placed underneath one end of the vivarium and should measure one-third to half the length of the floor base. These should be monitored on a regular basis to avoid malfunction, as it has been known for them to overheat. Other heating options are the ceramic heating devices or basking lights. It is always advised that these and all heating devices be used in conjunction with a good thermostat.

**FEEDING AND DIET:** The recommended and preferred diet of a corn snake of all ages is mice (of varying sizes). A hatching corn will eat one pinkie (new born mouse) every five to seven days. This will increase to two pinkies at a time over the course of a few months. When the snake is happily eating multiple pinkies, they can be upgraded to a fuzzy (when the baby mouse begins to grow hair and is slightly larger) or rat pup if these are more easily accessible. It is usually when the snake is about 6 months old that this can be done. Once the snake is eating multiple fuzzies then the move can be made toward small mice. As the snake grows larger so may the size of mouse being fed to it. As rule of thumb, a corn snake is able to eat a rodent that is 1.5 times the diameter of the snake’s body size. Once the snake is eating large mice it should only be fed once per week at equal intervals. Once the snake has eaten it should be left for a day or so before handling to allow it time to digest its food.

**SUBSTRATE:** A corn snake will defecate and urinate whenever it pleases. This should be cleaned away as soon as it is spotted to avoid unpleasant smells and unhygienic conditions for your snake. Having a substrate or layer covering the floor of the vivarium will help contain any mess as well as providing an easy floor for the snake to move across. A good substrate to use is beech chippings (**NEVER use cedar**) although many prefer the economy of the kitchen towel.

**AVOID:** Avoid play sand as this irritates the snake.

**SANITARY MEASURES:** Sanitary measures are important for your pet's health and well being. Faecal matter will need to be cleared on a daily basis and clean substrate added as required. Clean the tank weekly with an appropriate cage cleaner made for snakes.

Clean furnishings weekly by soaking in hot water and rinsing thoroughly before placing back into the enclosure.

Sanitary measures are also important for your health. Always wash your hands with a good antibacterial soap after you have finished cleaning and always wash hands between enclosures of other animals.

**WATER:** Fresh water should be provided on a daily basis. Snakes are very particular about their water and even if the water looks fresh, it may not seem that way to your corn snake.

**HEALTH:** As a snake grows, it removes (sheds) its outer skin. The first sign that this is about to happen is when it goes in the "blue". This is when the eyes appear cloudy blue color and the overall appearance of the snake is dull. It may be that the snake loses its appetite during this time and spend some time in its water bowl. This phase will last a few days and then it will clear. It will be a few days later that the snake will slough. A healthy snake should slough in one whole piece and providing a rough area of bark or something similar will provide it with a good place to rub its head against to begin the shed. The shedding will occur in a matter of minutes. A shed that is in small pieces is usually a good indicator that there is not enough humidity. Always check the shed to ensure that the whole skin has been removed, paying particular attention to the eyes and tail tip. It is very common for the tip of the tail to be left behind and can result in the tip eventually being lost if this occurs over period of time and the dead skin is not removed. Gently rubbing it with water should remove this remaining piece of shed. Close observation of your corn snake will soon enable you to spot any possible changes in behavior or health. If you do spot something that gives you concern, it is always recommended that you consult your vet to seek professional advice.