

## Grey Rat Snake

Gray rat snakes are very similar to corn snakes. These snakes are primarily diurnal and are rather quick paced. They are found in areas ranging from Southern Indiana, Florida Panhandle to West Mississippi. Captive bred snakes can live for up to 25 years but are more likely to live between 10 to 15 years. Snakes are best housed alone as company can be stressful. Low night time temperatures can cause snakes to hibernate.



## Glossary

**Reptile** – A cold-blooded vertebrate with scaly skin.

**Amphibian** – A cold-blooded vertebrate that begins life as an aquatic animal and grows into a terrestrial adult with lungs.

**Terrestrial** – A ground dwelling animal.

**Arboreal** – An animal that lives in trees.

**Diurnal** – Awake in the day.

**Nocturnal** – Awake during the night.

**UVB** – Ultraviolet radiation.

**Colubrid** – A family of snakes.

**Hybrid** – Offspring from animals of different species.

**Morph** – Colourations created due to genetics.

**Musk** – Unpleasant odour released when an animal is stressed or feels threatened.

### Live plants are only available on special order

If you require any further information, please ask our pet care advisors who will be very happy to help.

### Opening Times

Monday – Saturday: 9am – 6pm

Sunday: 9.30am – 4pm

### Chessington Garden Centre

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# Grey Rat Snake



## Care & Advice Sheet

Inspiration for your Home & Garden

## Size & Housing

These snakes are not large bodied but do get to a decent size. They generally reach anywhere between 4–6ft in length. They are best housed in wooden vivariums as they maintain the heat better than glass terrariums.

We recommend:

3ft x 2ft x 1.5ft – Minimum for 1 Adult

4ft x 2ft x 1.5ft – Ideal if the adult exceeds 5ft in length

## Handling

Gray rat snakes are generally fine with handling. Their general movement is a rather quick pace so pay attention to where your snake is moving. Whenever handling, provide support with both hands to the body and avoid getting too close to their head. If they are uncomfortable or feel threatened, they will shake the end of their tail quickly and you will hear it. Handling little and often is always best.

## Substrate & Furnishings

There should be plenty of places for the snake to hide. Provide hides (such as caves) in at least both sides of the enclosure so they have a hot and a cold hide to allow the snake to regulate their body temperature. With lots of hides in the enclosure the snake is likely to feel more secure. They can be very active snakes and will appreciate branches and ledges.

Artificial plants can be used for decoration. Spot pick the enclosure daily and full clean once or twice a month using a reptile specific disinfectant.

## Lighting & Temperature

They can be prone to UV conjunctivitis from high percentage UVB but you can provide lighting with a low percentage UVB if you wish for 10–12 hours a day. This is best controlled by a timer. They require a basking area with a temperature around 28–29°C – this is best achieved by using a heat bulb or ceramic heat emitter with a guard controlled by a thermostat at all times. There should be a temperature gradient across the enclosure with a cool end dropping by a few degrees. The temperature can fall to 21°C at night. Heat mats can be used however, bulbs are better at creating at correct ambient temperature and gradient.

## Food & Water

Fresh water should be provided daily in a large bowl. Monitor the humidity in case the snake has issues shedding. If so, provide a moist hide with moss. Juvenile snakes should be fed once a week. Adults can be fed once a week providing they are not obese but may become likely to feed every two weeks. The

general rule of thumb is to offer food no larger than the largest part of its body. Offer rodents such as:

- Mice
- Rats

Some snakes may have a food preference including type and colour. Be aware that rats are much fatter than mice so it is essential to keep an eye on the overall body condition of your snake. They may go off of their food in colder months.

Defrost the mice or rats for a few hours before feeding and use warm water to warm the rodent up if needed. Tongs should be used to feed the snake as they may miss the food. This is the main chance to be bitten. It is recommended to feed the snake in a separate container.

**Do not handle the snake for 24–48 hours after feeding as this can cause the snake to regurgitate the food.**

