

King Snake

Kingsnakes are colubrid snakes which are closely related to milk snakes and four other species within that genus. They can be considered good for beginners although they are very fast snakes. There are many different subspecies of kingsnake and they come in a variety of colours known as morphs. Their life span is usually longer than 20 years. Snakes are best housed alone as company can be stressful.

Please check species availability.



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

Leatherhead Road, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2NG

Tel: 01372 725 638

Email: info@chessingtongardencentre.co.uk

Web: www.chessingtongardencentre.co.uk



Please recycle me once you've finished reading.

Chessington

King Snake



Care & Advice Sheet

Inspiration for your Home & Garden

Size & Housing

These snakes are not large bodied. They rarely exceed lengths of 6ft but are more likely to reach 3–4ft. They are best housed in wooden vivariums as they maintain the heat better than glass terrariums. We recommend:

4ft x 2ft x 1.5ft – Minimum for 1 Adult



Handling

Kingsnakes can be a little temperamental at first as they are wild by nature. If it feels threatened or panics, it may shake its tail, attempt to bite or musk. It may also defecate or urinate on you. Handling little and often is best for the snake to get used to you. They are generally quite quick paced snakes so be sure to be aware of where it is moving and always support the body with

Substrate & Furnishings

Different substrates can be used for kingsnakes. For ease of cleaning, newspaper or paper towels can be used but must be changed when soiled. Other substrates include beech chips, corn cob granules or aspen.

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

Provide UVB (5%) to aid their metabolism and to create a daytime cycle of 10–12 hours. This is best controlled by a timer. They require a basking area with a temperature around 29°C – this is best achieved by using a heat bulb, ceramic heat emitter or heat mat controlled by a thermostat. There should be a temperature gradient across the enclosure with a cool end dropping to 22°C minimal. The temperature can also drop a further few degrees at night.

Food & Water

Fresh water should be provided daily. Humidity should be kept very low and if the enclosure looks moist, then remove the water for a day or two. Kingsnakes should be fed weekly and they may not feed if they are due to shed. The general rule of thumb is to offer food no larger than the largest part of its body. Offer a variety of:

- Mice
- Rats

Some snakes may have a preference over the food they are offered 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. Force feeding may be needed if their condition deteriorates.

Defrost the food item 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.

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