

King Snake

Scientific Name: Lampropeltis getulus

Native to: North America

Maximum Length: 2-6 feet

Life Span: 10-15 years

Characteristics:

King Snakes make very good pets because they are very easy to care for and come in a variety of different colors and patterns. They are generally curious, easy to handle, and voracious feeders. When your King Snake gets ready to shed, the eyes will turn a milky blue and the body color will start to become dull and develop a whitish sheen. Within a few days, it will shed its skin and be a beautiful glossy snake once again.

Care tips:

Enclosure: Use a 10-gallon terrarium for juveniles and a 20-gallon terrarium for adult King Snakes. Make sure the snake is no more than twice as long as its enclosure. Also provide hiding places and branches for the snake to climb on. Provide a secure enclosure, as King Snakes are known as great escape artists. Don't house King Snakes together or with other snakes or reptiles. They get their common name from their interest in eating other snakes, even venomous snakes.

Substrate: You can use Aspen shavings, Repti-chips, and cypress mulch. California King Snakes will do better on a drier substrate such as the shavings and chips. Florida King Snakes will do better on mulch or sphagnum moss as they are from a more tropical habitat.

Habitat: King Snakes love hiding spaces and branches to climb on. Clean their cage at least once a week.

Temperature and Lighting: Temperatures should be around 75-85° F. Radiant heat is recommended. Use an under-tank heater as the primary heat source and place it at one end of a long enclosure. King Snakes need 8-12 hours of daylight. Use a red light to view snakes at night.

Food and Water: Baby King Snakes will feed on small pinky mice. As the King Snake grows it can eat fuzzy mice, adult mice, and smaller rats. Frozen/thawed rodents are always best because live rodents may harm your snake. King Snake appetites diminish during winter months. Always provide a fresh bowl of water. King Snakes love to soak in their water, especially before they shed.