Snakes: Considerations Before Buying

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Due to their distinct and unique characteristics, snakes are one of the most fascinating non-conventional pets available. For this reason, snakes are subject to impulse purchases that often end in tragic results. Snakes have particular requirements and each species has specialized needs that differ from one species to the next.

Educate yourself about the species you're interested in before purchasing a pet snake. Research care, feeding and housing requirements, as well as equipment needed to provide the appropriate environment for your snake. Consider how large he will grow and what his habitat requires in terms of size of cage, lighting, temperature and humidity.

If you are unable to find sufficient information regarding the care of a particular snake you're interested in, perhaps it's not a good idea to pursue this snake as a pet. As snakes become more popular as pets, a greater variety of exotic wild-caught species are becoming commercially available. Just because they are commercially available does not necessarily mean these species make good pets. Consider captive-bred snakes as your first snake. Captive-bred snakes have proven their success under domestic care, are healthier than wild-caught snakes, and tend to be free of parasites.

Keep in mind that most snakes can live 10 or more years in captivity and it is difficult to find institutions that accept unwanted pet snakes. Make certain you are able to make this kind of long-term commitment. At one point or another, you will most likely require professional help so check to see if you have access to a veterinarian experienced with snakes before your purchase. It's also a good idea to look for a local herpetological society/club and become a member. The wealth of information and support you'll gain will be invaluable.

Selection:

When selecting a snake, avoid snakes that are known to be difficult to keep or have demanding nutritional or environmental needs. Venomous snakes are not a good choice and should never be attempted by the beginning hobbyist. Purchase your snake from a reputable dealer where snakes are housed in clean, well-maintained cages. Select a snake that looks healthy with good weight, is alert and has clear eyes.

Set up and Care:

After careful research, it is important to purchase and set up all the necessary equipment and housing prior to purchasing your snake. Having everything prepared beforehand allows you to test the equipment as well as monitor environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity. Make sure all the equipment is working properly and environmental conditions are stable and within acceptable parameters. You will then have a home waiting for your new pet snake.

Properly caring for a pet snake requires research and dedication. Caring for a pet snake should not be a chore. They depend on you to provide proper environmental conditions, nutrition, housing, and care. If you're willing to do the research and preparation, snakes can be wonderful and fascinating pets.

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