



HATCHING UP UNIQUE PETS SINCE 1985™

CARING FOR YOUR MANDARIN RAT SNAKE

Scientific Name: *Euprepiophis mandarinus* spp.
(alt. *Elaphe mandarinus* spp.)

Native to: South East Asia and Southern China

Maximum Length: 36-48 inches Chinese local; 48-72 inches Vietnam local

Life Span: 10-15 years



CHARACTERISTICS:

The background is a pale tan with interstitial black chevrons bordered by yellow. At the center of the chevrons is a bright circular yellow spot. The face is banded by yellow, black and pale tan. The side may have some dark brown blushing between the chevrons. The belly scales are irregularly banded with the background pale tan and black markings. Additionally on the Vietnam local the lines between areas of pigment are more organized than the Chinese locality, resulting in a brighter and cleaner looking snake.

CARE TIPS:

Characteristics: The background is a pale tan with interstitial black chevrons bordered by yellow. At the center of the chevrons is a bright circular yellow spot. The face is banded by yellow, black and pale tan. The side may have some dark brown blushing between the chevrons. The belly scales are irregularly banded with the background pale tan and black markings. Additionally on the Vietnam local the lines between areas of pigment are more organized than the Chinese locality, resulting in a brighter and cleaner looking snake.

Enclosure: Juveniles can be housed in 6 quart shoe boxes, we recommend from 24x12x12 to a 24x18x18 size vivarium for adults. If room temperatures do not meet requirements we recommend an under tank heater on one side of the enclosure. This will allow the snake to regulate their body temperature as needed. A Moist hide should be provided, sphagnum moss can be moistened and placed inside the hide to give the proper humidity, a dry hide can also be provided (do not add moss to the dry hide).

Substrate: A range of materials are recommended: Sphagnum peat moss, bark bedding, chipped wood bedding. These Rat snakes will often want to burrow or hide, most beddings will be sufficient for these needs.

Habitat: House alone; snakes will compete both passively and aggressively for the best areas in the cage, water, and food. Branches can be provided, although it is not guaranteed that the rat snakes will use these for climbing, often the rat snake will want to burrow under their bedding or spend most of their time in their hide.

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Temperature and Lighting: A temperature gradient of 75° F-85° F should be provided; this can be achieved by placing a heat pad on one side of a larger enclosure. It is recommended that this is tested in the home before receiving the snake to allow for modification if the enclosure does not meet the requirements. Being cold blooded, your snake can only regulate its body temperature by physically moving to colder or warmer areas, so it's important that you provide your snake with a range to choose from. A light cycle can help regulate their feeding and breeding response. An under tank heater is the best method for providing heat. All of the mandarin rat snakes require relatively high humidity, with natural ranges of 62%-82% relative humidity. A Moist hide should be provided; sphagnum moss can be moistened and placed inside the hide to give the proper humidity. A dry hide can also be provided; the enclosure should have ranges of humidity as to let the snake regulate this as well as temperature. If an enclosure is kept too humid the snake may develop respiratory infections.

Food and Water: Juveniles are fed pinkie mice; Frozen/thawed rodents, such as **Mack's Natural Reptile Food Frozen Rodents**, are recommended because live rodents may harm your snake. Throughout the growth of the animal they can be fed increasing sizes of live or frozen mice. In the wild the Mandarin Rat Snake will burrow and root out rodent dens to eat the smaller rodents. Mandarin Rat Snakes do not digest large meals very well. When feeding sub adult and adult Mandarin Rat Snakes offer 1-4 small food items of the appropriate size. Food items should be the width of the widest part of the snake's body. If your Mandarin has trouble eating, place the food items in a hide and then place the hide inside the cage. Fresh, clean water should be provided at all times. Some snakes will bath in their water and occasionally foul the water with their waste, water should be changed immediately in these cases.