



# Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes

*Thamnophis spp.*

## Care Sheet

### Average Size

2 - 4 feet long

### Average Lifespan

15 - 20 years

### Diet

Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes are strict carnivores. They eat a variety of worms, insects, fish, and small rodents. When feeding frozen prey, be sure the prey is thawed thoroughly. When feeding live prey, be sure to monitor the feeding to prevent the prey from attacking the snake.

### Feeding

Feed babies 1 - 2 times a week. At 2-3 months of age you can reduce to once weekly. Adults can eat weekly, although some keepers feed every other week. Most species will eat several smaller prey items, while some will eat one larger prey item.

### Housing

**Habitat** - Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes come from North and Central America. In the wild they are found in open grass and wood lands. Keep the cage warm and dry and provide plenty of places for hiding. Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes may be kept alone or in groups. If housed together snakes should be of similar size to avoid injury. Breeders generally keep Garter, Ribbon, & Water snakes in separate enclosures until breeding time. At that point, the breeder will house the snakes together.

**Size** - These species are generally small. Most species can be kept in a 10-gallon tank for the entirety of their lives.

**Substrate** - Shredded aspen is a perfect substrate. Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes love to burrow. Shredded aspen provides a fluffy substrate easy for burrowing and cleaning. Provide 3-6 inches of substrate.

**Temperature** - Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes require a basking spot of 85°- 90°F. The cool end of the tank can be as cool as 70°F.

**Humidity** - Humidity levels should be between 35% - 60%.

**Watering** - Provide fresh drinking water daily. Garter, Ribbon, & Water Snakes like to soak their body in water. Provide a bowl of water large enough so that the snake can fully submerge its body.

**Lighting** - Since this is a nocturnal species, it requires only one light bulb. This is the heat lamp which also emits UVA. There is no current proof that the animal requires UVB light, although some keepers prefer to provide UVB.

**Plant and Fish bulbs are not UVB bulbs.**



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