



# Garter Snake at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner**

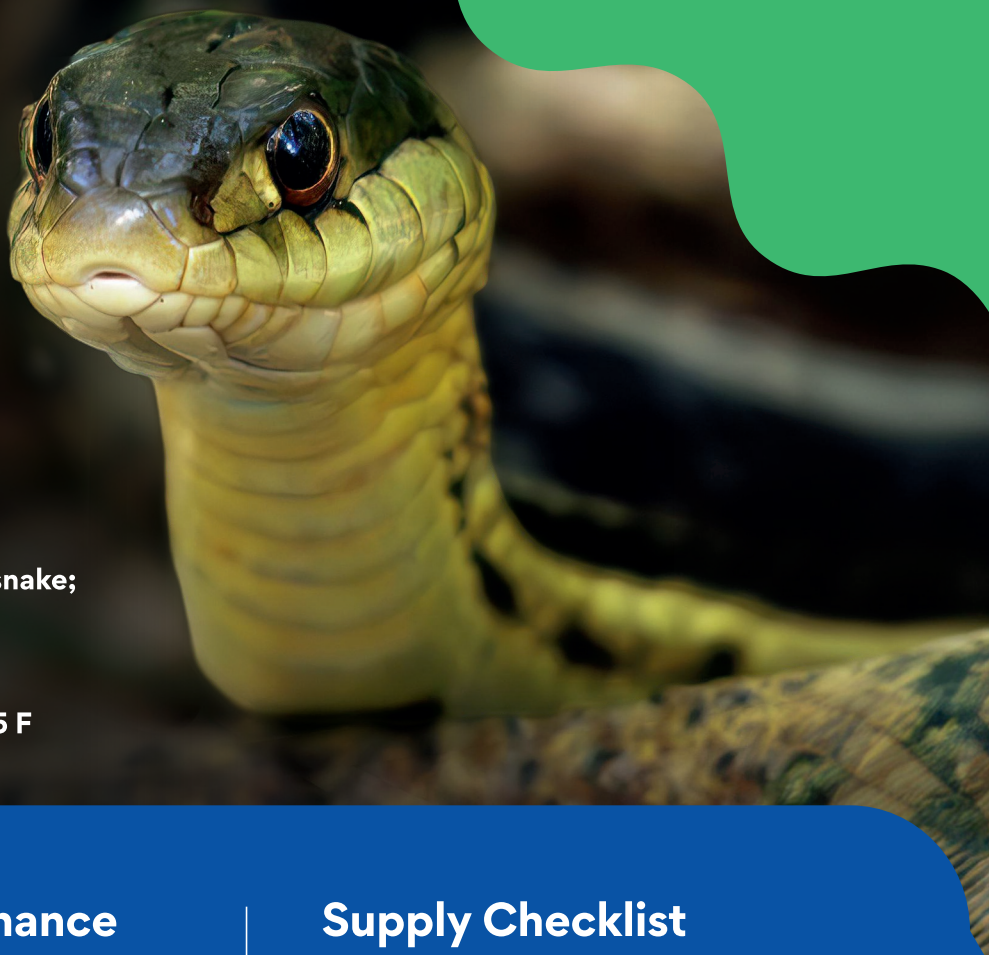
Average lifespan: **10 years or longer with proper care**

Average adult size: **2-4' long**

Diet: **Previously frozen thawed rodents and live earthworms**

Minimum habitat size: **40 gallons for one snake; 55 gallons for two**

Temperature: **Warm end around 85 F; basking area around 90 F; cool end 70-75 F**



**Fun fact** ↪ Their slow metabolism means they can go weeks or months without eating.

## Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- A single garter snake needs at least a 40-gallon enclosure with a secure mesh lid. Two garter snakes need at least a 55-gallon tank, and they should not live with other snake species or reptiles.
- Line the tank with 1-2 inches of substrate, such as sphagnum moss or dry leaf litter. Avoid pine, cedar, and reptile carpet.
- Keep the warm end around 85 F, the basking area around 90 F, and the cool end at 70-75 F. Humidity should stay between 30-60% and be slightly higher during shedding.
- Provide a large, shallow water dish, two hide boxes, climbing branches, vines, and UV light for 10-12 hours daily. Clean and disinfect the habitat at least weekly.



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## Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Substrate and sphagnum moss
- Frozen rodents and live earthworms
- Hideaway places
- Climbing décor and plants
- Heat lights and fixtures
- Thermostat and thermometers
- Humidity gauge and mister
- Water dish
- Under-tank heater
- UV light

**Fun fact** ↪ They are semi-aquatic and spend time on land and in water.

## Health

Garter snakes should visit a veterinarian once a year for a checkup. Healthy garter snakes have clear eyes, a clean vent, bright striping, smooth skin, and regular tongue-flicking. Shed skin should come off easily.

Contact a veterinarian if you notice stuck shed, skin lesions, tumors, lethargy, appetite loss, sudden trouble moving, aggressive behavior, vent discharge, or skin ulcers.

Wash your hands before and after handling, since garter snakes can carry Salmonella.

**Fun fact** ↪ Garter snakes are also called garden snakes.

## Diet

Garter snakes should eat previously frozen, thawed rodents and live earthworms.

Juveniles can eat pinkies, which are newborn, hairless mice. As they grow, they can eat fuzzies and hoppers. Adults can eat mice and rats.

Juveniles should be fed every other day, while adults are usually fed once a week. The feeding schedule may change based on the snake's size, age, and activity level.

Prey should be the same size as the snake's mid-body width. Always use feeding tongs instead of fingers.

**Fun fact** ↪

They do not constrict and are not venomous to humans.

