

Ribbon Snake



What do we look like?

We are small and very gentle, even-tempered animals. This makes us easy to handle. We can grow to be about 4 feet in length and can live up to 12 years. Ribbon Snakes have a slender body with a narrow head. We have a brownish or an olive green color to us with three yellow stripes along our backs with splotches between the stripes. Like most snakes, we shed our skin. When that starts to happen the colors on our scales turn dull and our eyes start to look hazy.

Ribbon Snakes are very similar to Garter snakes. We are almost identical in length, coloring and behavior. The way you can tell us apart from the Garter Snakes is that our tail is much longer than theirs, and our scale pattern is a little different.

Ribbon Snake



Garter Snake



Where can you find us?

We have a pretty wide range from Northern and Southern Canada, throughout the United States and the northern part of South America. We are very good at surviving in harsh conditions. You can even find us in Alaska. We like to live in wetlands and around the edges of ponds and lakes. Even though we have no arms or legs we are very good swimmers. It is important that we live near open areas so we can get sun when we need it. You see, we are cold-blooded, so we depend on the sun's heat to stay warm. We also tend to live in grassy areas because the patterns and colors on our bodies help us blend in with grass. This is important because when you blend in you are less likely to be eaten by a predator.



What do we eat?

We are carnivores so we like to eat small fish, insects, frogs, tadpoles, salamanders and earthworms. We don't eat much in one sitting and feed every few days. Before we shed, we usually stop eating for one or two days. Ribbon snakes also eat many common garden pests like slugs and insect larvae.



Some cool facts...

- Ribbon snakes are found farther North than most snake species in the world.
- Ribbon snakes are livebearers. We can give birth to up to 24 live babies at a time even though we are reptiles!
- We rarely bite people when we are handled, but if we get startled we give off a very foul smell.