

Rough Green Snakes

(*Opheodrys aestivus*)



An Introductory
Information Leaflet



Email: info@eurorep.co.uk
website: www.eurorep.co.uk

Europe's Premier
Reptile Product Company

Hot Spot

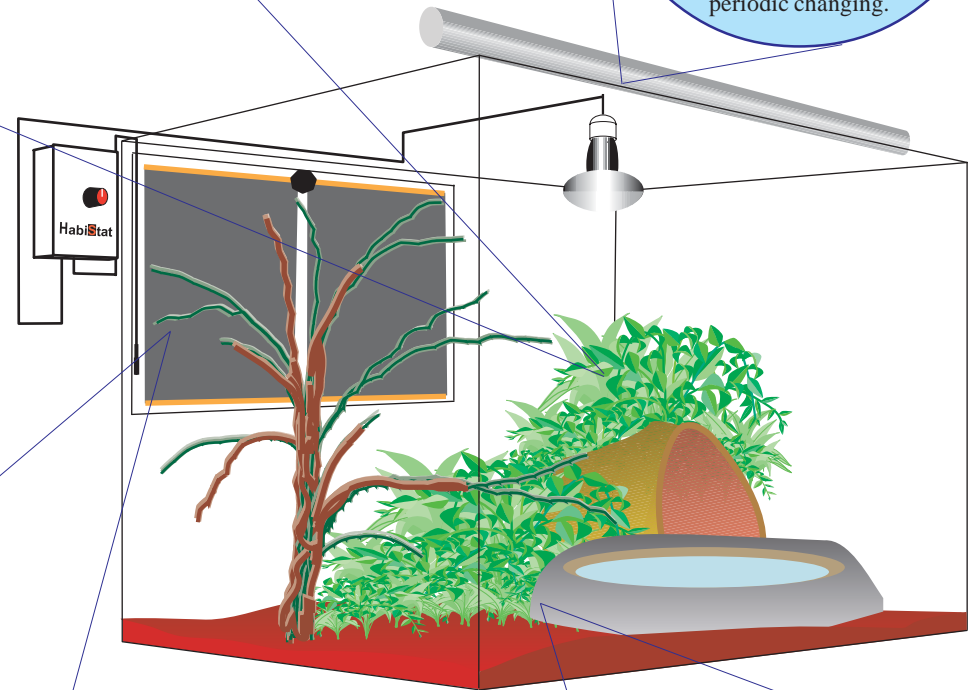
A local area of higher temperature may be created with an *Reptile Basking Spotlamp* or a small *Pearlco* ceramic. Use them in conjunction with a *HabiStat* thermostat for precise control. Protect the animals with an intervening wire mesh if necessary. Hot spots should be maintained for the same day length as the lights, fourteen hours

Cleanliness and Hygiene: A routine cleaner for all nonporous surfaces would be *Vetaclean*, followed by a thorough rinse. Any little graze or blemish on the animals themselves would benefit from the first aid afforded by dabbing the wound with *Vetadine*. As far as human hygiene is concerned, *Vetasept Surgical Scrub* will clean hands and surfaces while *Vetasept Hand Rub* will allow adequate cleansing and disinfection even in cases when water is unavailable.

Lighting.

A full spectrum fluorescent tube may be needed to keep these snakes healthy. *Natural Sunlight* lamps are bright and have useful amounts of UV light. The lamps need to be on about fourteen hours per day in summer and ten in winter. Between six months and one year is about as long as the lamps will emit UV light. So they will need periodic changing.

Cage Decor: Use Rain Forest Substrate as a base as it will stand up to the periodic spraying with water these snakes need. A large *Repti-rock* water dish could be used to provide a 'pond'. Cork bark tubes could be used to make an interesting three dimensional display. While draping *Repti-Vines* in the cage will provide refuges the snakes can hide in or move through to loosen shedding skin. *Repti-rock* caves would lend even more functionality and security.



A Cage suitable for keeping Rough Green Snakes.

An interesting multi species display can be set up involving animals that live happily together. Rough Green Snakes, Green Anoles and Green Tree Frogs will all live together and require identical conditions.

Food: Crickets, locusts and waxworms are all taken and are easily obtained. Flies and silkworm larvae are another source of food that is sometimes available. Do not dust the insects prior to feeding but supplement them by 'gut loading'. Fresh drinking water should be available all the time.

Background Heat

Use a heat mat between half and two thirds the size of the cage to provide background heating. The hottest spot in the cage should not be above 32°C while the coolest should not be below 23°C. Use a *HabiStat Mat - Stat* if the temperature is too hot but put the whole cage in a cooler place if the temperature is not cool enough.

Cage Set Up

The cage should be set up to allow an active arboreal snake plenty of scope to climb, bask in a hot spot, move to a cooler spot and look for food. The snakes should also be able to secrete themselves into refuges and rub themselves against something when shedding their skin.

Shopping List

Not every thing is needed to begin with, usually one item from each of the categories marked •. As a basic starting point the following essentials are considered the minimum needed:

Vivarium
Heat Mat
Basking Spot Lamp
HabiStat Dimming Thermostats (Highly recommended)
Rain Forest Substrate
Repti-rock dish
Thermometer
Repti-Vine
Piece of Cork Bark
Natural Sunlight lamp
Arcadia Control Units

After a while as your collection and experience grows other alternatives and extras can be used.

- **HabiStat, Heat Mats** (6x11/7w, 11x11/12w, 17x11/20w, 23x11/28w, 29x11/35w, 35x11/42w & 49x11/55w) & **Strips** (17x6/10w, 23x6/15w, 35x6/22w & 47x6/30w)
- **Basking Spot lamp** (60w, 100w, Normal, Daylight and Red Night types.)
- **Pearlco Bulb Ceramics** (60w, 100w, Reflectors & Holders)
- **Thermometers** (Dial, minimum - maximum & digital/electronic)
- **Hygrometers** (Dial & digital/electronic)
- **HabiStat Thermostats** (Mat-Stat/100w, Temperature/300w, Twin/2x300w, Pulse Proportional/600w, Dimming/600w & Night Time Drop Function)
- **HabiStat Night Eye, Sun Switches & Moon Switches**
- **Repti-rock Dishes Hides & Caves**
- **Repti-Vines**
- **Rain Forest Substrate**
- **Cork Bark**
- **Natural Sunlight or Reptile D₃ Lights** (18"/15w & 24"/18w)
- **Arcadia Control Units** (15w, 2x15w, 18w, 2x18w, 20w & 2x20w)
- **Crickets** &/or **Locusts** &/or **Mealworms**, **Silkmoths**
- **Mealworm Diet Plus**
- **Cricket Diet Plus**
- **Reptavite**
- **Reptasol**
- **ProBalance**
- **Vetaclean**
- **Vetadine**
- **Vetasept Surgical Scrub**
- **Vetasept Hand Rub**
- **Hand Spray**
- **Books & Leaflets**



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Rough Green Snakes...

...Biology

Rough Green Snakes come from the south eastern area of the USA. They are not large snakes, averaging 70cm as adults. Bright green above and yellow beneath, this attractive snake has a bright red tongue but is completely harmless.

...Housing

These snakes are best housed in a tall cages as they are naturally arboreal, that is they live in trees and bushes, often over hanging pools and streams. Rough Green Snakes are best housed in as large a cage as possible. The types with sliding glass doors to the front being especially resistant to escape. Another often used cage, especially for juveniles is a converted aquarium. A special adapting lid is used to contain the reptiles and house any equipment that may be used.

As a guide, a minimum size, 90 cm x 45 cm x 60 cm would house a 45 cm snake. The cage should be set up in a manner similar to the diagram over leaf. It will be necessary to provide a local hot spot near 35°C, while the coolest part of the cage should be nearer 25°C. The hot spot can easily be arranged by installing a *Basking Spot Lamp*. To ensure the cage does not overheat, the lamp is best controlled with a *HabiStat Dimming Thermostat*. White and UV light, from a lamp like a *Reptile D₃* tube, will be needed and should be present for a similar period; about sixteen hours per day in summer dropping to eight in winter.

Ventilation is very important. These snakes require high humidity but cannot stand stagnant air conditions. Fresh air moving into the cage is essential. Use the upward draughts caused by warm air rising to flush out the cage and drag fresh air in. A light daily misting with a hand sprayer will provide the humidity that is required.

...Husbandry

Rough Green Snakes are best kept in groups. Of course the more snakes kept in each cage, the larger the cage should be. They show very little aggression towards each other and often breed when kept together.

To handle this type of snake the whole animal should be gently held in one hand with the other hand controlling it. These animals do not really like being handled, so should only be touched if absolutely necessary. They are, however, completely non aggressive; relying on flight to escape any danger.

In time the cage will begin to look scruffy as faeces and debris builds up. As everything recommended for the cage is washable or disposable, a good clean out is easily done. Depending on the size of the animals and the density at which they are kept, six to

eight weeks would be about as long as the cage could be left before being completely cleaned. The cage set up advised in this leaflet is practicable and can be made to look pleasing to the eye. If a more natural set up is envisaged, it may be best to wait until some experience is gained. In any case, some of the very informative books on reptiles in general and snakes in particular could be investigated.

...Food & Feeding

Rough Green Snakes are insectivorous and will eat crickets and locusts. They will also eat, but less easily obtained, flies and spiders. Some people maintain these snakes prefer caterpillar like grubs, so waxworms and silkmoth larvae could also be tried.

Feed the snakes every other day with just enough to be completely eaten in about half an hour. Try not to leave uneaten insects in the cage as these just annoy the snakes.

A large water dish kept full of fresh water should always be available. The snakes will drink and will wish to bathe in fresh water from time to time so the water dish may need regular changing.

...Reproduction

Most male snakes are proportionately smaller than the females and they have an obvious swelling to the tail just past the vent. The tails are also proportionately longer and less tapering in the males.

A period of courtship proceeds mating and during this time much activity can be expected. Eggs are laid after mating and they may take several weeks to hatch. To grow to adult in captivity may take as short a time as twelve months but in the wild, two to five years may elapse. A cooler winter period may be needed to condition the snakes for breeding in the following season. Some reading and research will provide the details.

...Health & Disease

These snakes can live for several years in nature but seem to live even longer in captivity. As an average, between four and twelve years can be expected. They do not suffer from many diseases and veterinary attention is rarely needed. The three most common ailments include infestations of mites, skin blisters and a wheezy respiratory condition. The latter two are caused by damp airless conditions. An environment and diet as described in this leaflet will preclude most of these problems. Good practice, hygiene and first aid will probably deal with rest. If real disease is discovered, a vet must of course, be consulted. Pet snakes do not pose a real threat to human health. All the normal hygiene precautions regarding humans and animals should, however, be observed. This would include washing hands after touching the snakes and any of their associated items.

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