

Reptile Accessories and Supplies

Large reptiles need large cages or other enclosures. They will also need bedding, a water source, tunnel logs, rocks, trees, steps, plants, a ground cover of some sort for the bottom of their enclosure, and more food than a small pet. The costs can add up before you realize it! But once you have taken care of the initial investment, the big worry lies in being able to provide the proper amount and type of food and bedding. Vet care should also be considered. If you can't afford to have the reptile treated, you may want to pass on adding it to your home.

If you're interested in keeping a snake for a pet, you may want to consider the cost and accessibility of the food necessary for the reptile's survival. Do you have freezer room and a strong stomach for the little frozen mice and rats you'll need to feed your pet? Mice and rats can cost up to \$1.50 each, with the average snake needing 4 a month. Distilled drinking water costs from 58 cents to \$1 per gallon and should last a month just for drinking. Of course, if you have a large snake, you'll need a large source of water for its bathing.

You should plan on spending at least \$100 for the corn snake aquarium, rocks, heat source, water dish, and two pieces of indoor/outdoor carpet for the floor. The carpet is the most economical investment for bedding as it can be washed and reused, keeping one piece clean at all times. The corn snake itself can cost from \$20 to \$350, depending on what type you choose.

Pet care books are available at local libraries. But if you can't find the one you want, they cost less than \$10 even in most pet stores and can be purchased at local discount stores. Filters for turtle aquariums can cost from \$18 to \$30. Food for iguanas can become costly as they need fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis in addition to food you can purchase in dried form. A 40 ounce container of Iguana Juvenile pellets costs around \$16.

Bedding for all reptiles must be kept clean to avoid disease from overexposure to its own urine and feces. The cost can start at \$2.50 and rise depending on where you purchase and what you prefer. Just keep in mind that not all bedding is safe for all animals. Replacement will depend on the size of the housing, the size of your reptile, and how many reptiles you own.

If you have a reptile that climbs, you may need a fresh air habitat with a mesh screen and water resistant bottom. The small ones can cost around \$30 for one that stands 20 inches tall or \$80 for one that stands 30 inches tall.

Lighting costs about \$18 for a 10 inch clamp-on lamp that dims. A combination

lamp can cost \$48. An infrared heater can cost \$23. There's also the cost of the electricity needed to run the environmental equipment.

Other items you may need to price are huts for hiding, chemical additives for the water-dwellers, pumps, liners, netting, stands, bulbs, sterilizers, and algae scrapers. If it seems overwhelming, take your time to digest the information and make the best decision. It's not fair to the pet to provide less than adequate housing and other needs.