

Where to Buy a Reptile to Keep as a Pet

Reptiles can be intimidating. They can also be great pets. The key is in the education of the owner. Many reptiles are purchased for pets for the wrong reasons. Sometimes a reptile is bought out of spite towards another family member. Sometimes a reptile is purchased as merely a show-piece to impress others. Maybe owning an exotic pet makes the person feel more important somehow, more interesting, more dangerous. But many people just don't know what they're getting into because they don't research properly beforehand.

First, you must know the laws in your state for owning an exotic pet. In Australia, for example, you need a license to keep a native reptile in captivity. You'll need to know if you're allowed to obtain a reptile from even your own backyard. This is also considered the wild, as it is a natural environment. A reptile keeper or a pet shop may be the only places to legally obtain a reptile to keep as a pet.

It's really better for the reptile as well to purchase one that is born in captivity than to remove one from its natural environment and thrust it into captivity.

You can, of course, take your chances and get a pet from an advertisement in a newspaper. Many times this is a great way to get a good deal on the cage and accessories as well as starter food for the pet. Some people sell their pets in garage sales. Sometimes people set up an area in a parking lot to display their pet. Remember you are taking your chances on the health of the pet, on any diseases the pet may be able to spread to you as well. Hopefully, you will already have a good idea of what the pet and all it comes with would cost should you purchase it all new so that you won't get ripped off.

Big well-known flea markets have been known to carry reptiles and accessories. Regulars keep booths on a regular basis, so that returning to ask questions may not be a problem. Be sure to ask if the seller is a regular at the flea market or how you may contact him/her if not. You could order your reptile from a magazine ad or perhaps from an online source. Many times a popular mall will have a pet shop as well, or there could be one nearby.

To learn about the reptile and its needs, check out books at the local library. Check for others in your area who may already own a reptile of your interest so that you can get pointers and advice from someone experienced. There may be groups in your area for exotic pet owners. You'll need to know who these people take their reptile to for injuries or illness, too.

Be aware that just because a pet shop has a certain pet for sale, does not mean

the owner or salesclerk is an expert in the care and special needs of that particular animal. Do your own research beforehand, no matter where you choose to purchase your reptile!