



# Snake Prevention and Management

Nebraska Extension



# Encountering Venomous Snakes in Nebraska is unusual

❖ Only 4 of the 29 species of snakes in Nebraska are venomous

- Prairie Rattlesnake
- Timber Rattlesnake
- Massasauga
- Copperhead

❖ Venomous snakes are almost impossible to find in most of Nebraska



# Venomous Snakebite

## First Aid

In the unlikely event:

- ❖ Don't panic, stay calm
- ❖ Seek medical care immediately
- ❖ Call Poison Control : # 800-222-1222
- ❖ Do not use ice
- ❖ Do not cut and suck
- ❖ Do not drink alcohol
- ❖ Do not use a tourniquet



# Snakes Rarely Bite Humans

- ❖ The teeth of all non-venomous snakes in Nebraska are not long enough to harm even a small child
- ❖ Venomous snakes are almost impossible to find in most of Nebraska

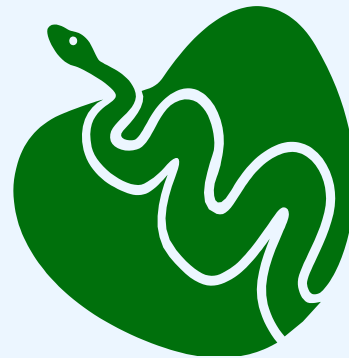
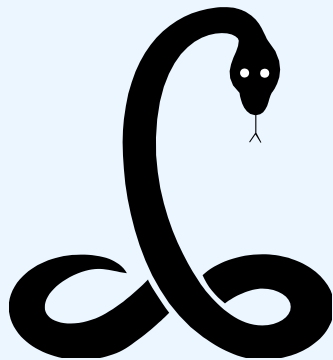


Look! No teeth!



# Snakes Rarely Cause Human Disease

- Snakes are poikilotherms (“cold blooded”). Their low body temperature provides a difficult environment for carrying warm-blooded diseases
- Most wild Nebraska snakes test negative for Salmonellosis, one of the only diseases people can get from reptiles



# Cause no property Damage

❖ snakes cause no physical harm

- to plants, the landscape, or structures
- Snakes cannot chew or make holes; they accidentally find openings to structures
- No snake "wants" to be in a human structure



# Benefits of Snakes

❖ All snakes eat

➤ insects, worms, and/or rodents



photo by Dianne Maly





Since snakes:

eat harmful insects & rodents

don't damage plants or property

rarely transmit diseases

Extreme few are venomous or bite

**They are NOT Real pests!**





# Ophiophobia: The Fear of Snakes

❖ Phobia/fear based on

- Ignorance/lack of proper education
- Superstition
- Religion
- Unknown



# To Identify A Nebraska Snake

❖ Visit <http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/>

Or

❖ Send photos of snakes or shed skins  
to [dferraro1@unl.edu](mailto:dferraro1@unl.edu)



# Garter Snakes:

## Perceived as the biggest problem in Nebraska

- ❖ Four types (species) of Garter Snakes in Nebraska
  - Common (Red-sided)
  - Plains
  - Western ribbon
  - Western-terrestrial



# Garter Snakes:

## Perceived as the biggest problem in Nebraska

- ❖ Any snakes in Nebraska with a stripe down the middle of the back, regardless of color, are likely Garter Snakes
  - The non-poisonous, shy, and smaller **Lined Snake**, which has a double row of half-moon black markings on its underside, is closely related and looks similar to a Garter. It is uncommon yet may also be seen.





# Garter Snakes



Photos: University of Nebraska



# Garter Snakes:

## Perceived as the biggest problem in Nebraska

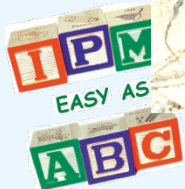
- ❖ Garter Snakes feed on earthworms, insects, and minnows
- ❖ Garter Snakes bear live young. In Nebraska, young are born in August. Only one litter per year of 12-20 young.





# Garter Snakes form "Mating Clusters" in early spring

Photo: University of Nebraska





# Snake Management

## ❖ Habitat

### Modification

- Replace loose rock walls
- Use tight fitting blocks or wood timbers
- Keep plant materials short and well groomed



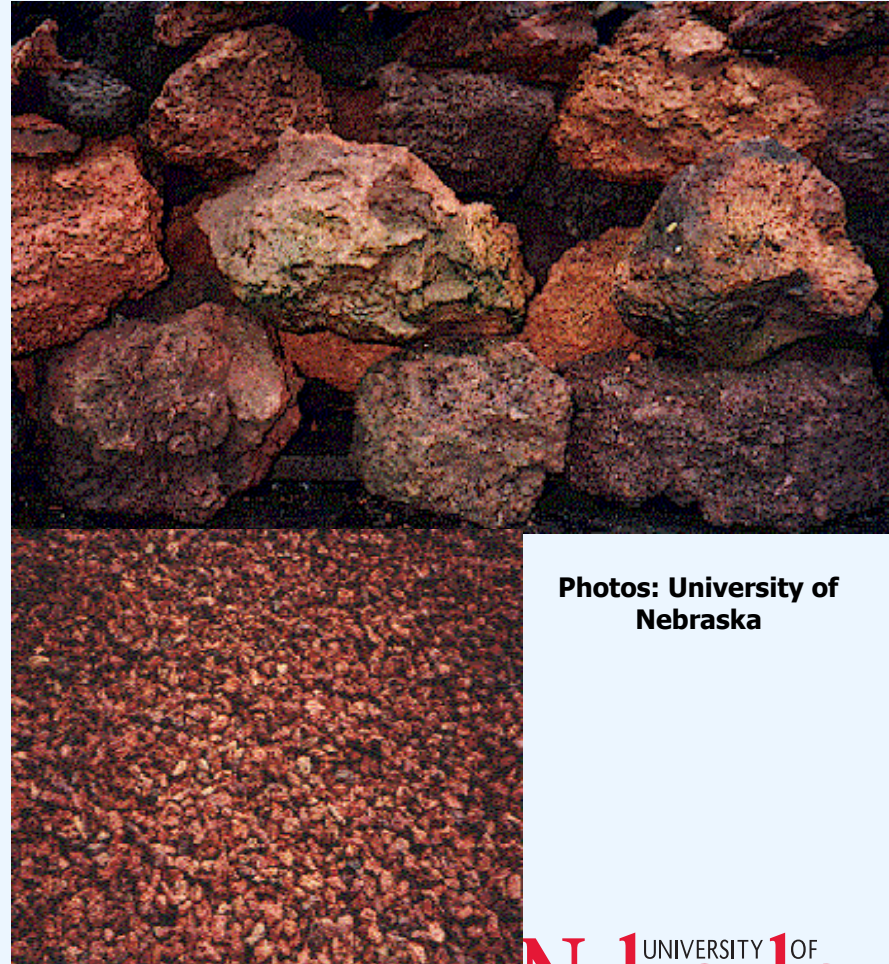
Photos: University of Nebraska



# Snake Management

## ❖ Habitat Modification

- Sharp Laval Rock in and adjacent to structure will help prevent snakes from basking near the building
- The Laval Rock should be 2-3 ft wide and 5-6 inches deep with no plantings



Photos: University of Nebraska



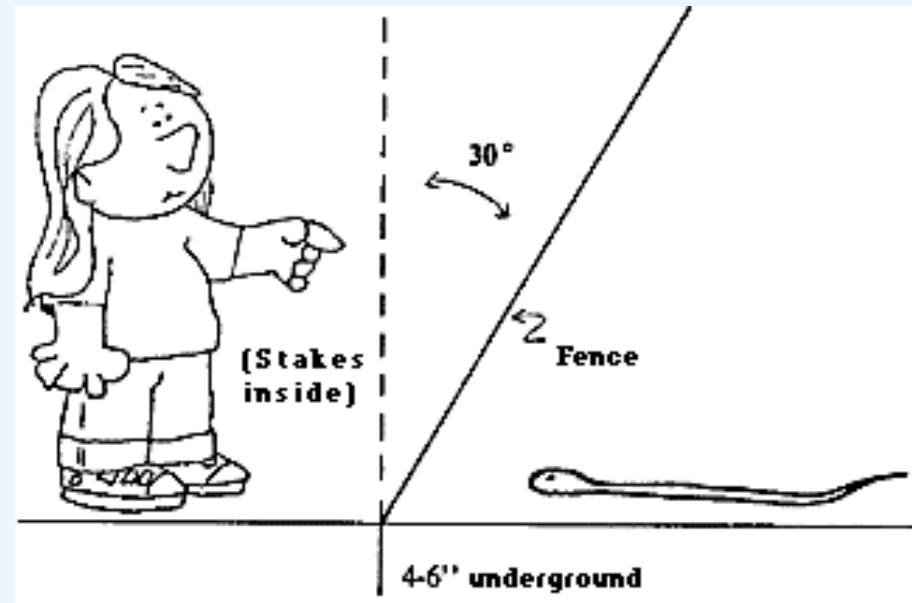
# Snake Management

## ❖ Exclusion

- Outdoors: Fences with holes less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch
- Indoors : Seal all holes and openings greater than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in foundation and siding

## ❖ Caulking and Sealants

- Any type of caulking will prevent snakes as they cannot chew through



Drawing: University of Nebraska





# Snake Management



Snake repellent being crossed by a snake.

## ❖ Repellents

- Extensive testing in Nebraska and at other universities has demonstrated that **repellents do not work** on snakes



➤ Products tested include: Sulphur, Moth Balls, Insecticides, Ammonia, and Lime

# Snake Management

## ❖ Hand Removal

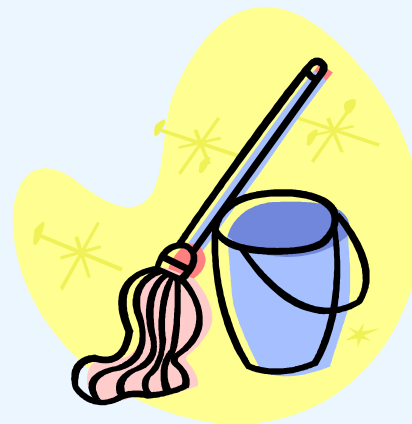
- Non-venomous snakes may be picked up with a gloved hand.
- Almost any type of leather glove is sufficient for handling any non-venomous Nebraska snake.



# Snake Management

## ❖ Alternative Removal Method

- If a non-venomous snake is indoors, sweep it into a bucket and release it outdoors within 100 yards.
- Release it in secluded area.



# When you can't find the snake

1. Wad up a wet towel and place in a warm-dark corner of room.
2. Cover with a dry towel.
3. Check daily.
  - The snake will hide under the cloth/towels and can be removed.



Photo: University of Nebraska



Photo: University of Nebraska





# Snake Management

## ❖ Capture and Removal

- Glue traps or “sticky boards” may also be used to capture snakes indoors that are hard to find. Place glue traps in a row as to cover at least one square foot.
- Inspect the boards morning and evening of each day.
- Once the snake is caught, bring it outdoors to a secluded area (bushes or tall grass) and pour vegetable oil over it to release it from the glue.



# Snake Management



Photo: University of Nebraska

## ❖ Removal

- Venomous snakes should only be handled by experienced persons.
- Special snake tongs must be used when handling any venomous snakes.



# Snake Management

## ❖ Translocation

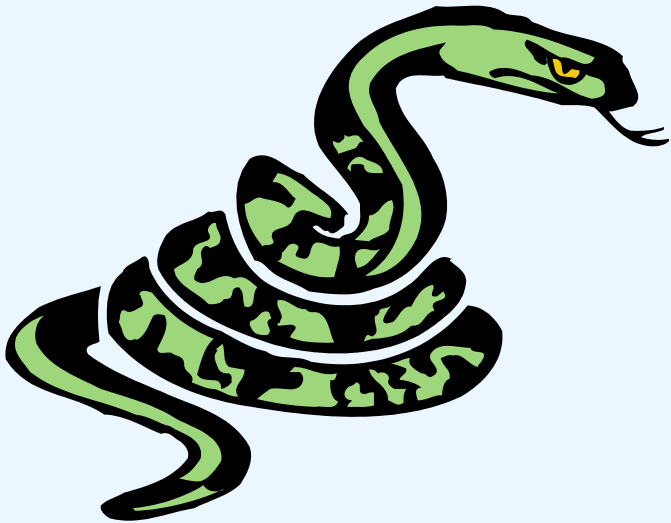
- In Nebraska, no snake may be placed back in the wild more than 100 yards from where it was captured



# Snake Management

## ❖ Lethal Control

- No registered toxicants
- No legal kill trap
- Others: Physical methods can be used (shovels, hoes, etc.), yet not recommended



# Resources/Information

- ❖ Reptiles and Amphibians of Nebraska

<http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/>

- ❖ Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management

<http://icwdm.org>

For snake or shed snake skin identification:

- Send images/photos to [dferraro1@unl.edu](mailto:dferraro1@unl.edu)
- Or call (402) 490-2155



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Photo: University of Nebraska

