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.

Photo: University 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

Photo: University of Nebraska
To Identify A Nebraska Snake

- Visit http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/
- Or
- Send photos of snakes or shed skins to 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 then $\frac{1}{4}$ 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.

Photo: University of Nebraska
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.
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

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

Photo: University of Nebraska
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

- IPM EASY AS ABC
- UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA LINCOLN

[Image of a snake]
Resources/Information

- Reptiles and Amphibians of Nebraska
  [http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/](http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/)

- Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management
  [http://icwdm.org](http://icwdm.org)

For snake or shed snake skin identification:
- Send images/photos to dferraro1@unl.edu
- Or call (402) 490-2155
Credits

- **Content Specialist**
  - Dennis Ferraro, Nebraska Extension

- **Content Editors**
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- **Photos**
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Credits

- Photos cont.
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- Artwork/Graphics
  - Nebraska Extension