herpy

SNAKES

Plains Garter Snake

Thamnophis radix

Thamnophis radix is a slim, striped garter snake from the prairies and open grasslands of central North America. It has a yellow or orange stripe down the back and grows to 40-70 cm. It is very tolerant of cold and gives birth to live young. It is hardy and can be kept on thawed mice, but it escapes through the smallest gaps.

Family: Colubridae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**40-70 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 50 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**23-27 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-24 °C**
Humidity	**35-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Winter rest	**8-15 °C** 8-16 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Litter size	**5-60 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**83-102 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little species-specific knowledge exists about keeping *Thamnophis radix*.
TEMPERATURE	There must be a clear temperature gradient. The basking spot should be 29-32 °C measured on the surface, the cool end 23-27 °C and the night 18-24 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The air humidity should be 35-60 %, highest at the cool end and at night. The enclosure should be dry, because persistently damp conditions cause blisters on the belly and fungal infections.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Thamnophis radix* is diurnal and thrives in strong daylight. UVB is not strictly necessary, but is recommended.
FEEDING	In the wild *Thamnophis radix* eats earthworms, slugs, frogs, toads, salamanders, fish and the occasional mouse.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Thamnophis radix* is quick and alert, but usually becomes calm if handled regularly from a young age. Let new animals settle in for about two weeks, and start handling them only when they are feeding steadily.
NATIVE RANGE	Canada and United States.