

SOME SNAKES CAN DISAPPEAR

Snakes are great hunters, but they often become prey themselves. Birds, raccoons, foxes and other animals have a taste for snakes. And one way to hide is camouflage. Many snakes sport colours and patterns that allow them to blend in with their surroundings. For instance, a green tree python looks like a vine when it coils itself around a branch. A yellow eyelash viper blends in with flowers. And a rainbow boa disappears in leaves or tree stumps!

DID YOU KNOW...?

Ireland has NO native snake species. The only other places without snakes are New Zealand, Iceland, Greenland and Antarctica!

This Brazilian rainbow boa is a master of disguise!

VENOM

CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU!

Snake bites can sometimes be deadly. But scientists have discovered that these very same poisons can also be used to make medicines! Check out these seven healing serpents...

COPPERHEAD

SNAKE SECRET: These poisonous snakes from North America climb trees to hunt for large insects called cicadas.
VENOM USED TO TREAT: Breast cancer

WESTERN RATTLESNAKE

SNAKE SECRET: Found in North America and Mexico, these snakes' rattles are made of keratin – the same protein that's in your hair and fingernails!
VENOM USED TO TREAT: Heart attacks

GABOON VIPER

SNAKE SECRET: This super serpent, from Western or Central Africa, has the longest fangs of any venomous snake – five centimetres!
VENOM USED TO TREAT: Strokes

BRAZILIAN PIT VIPER

SNAKE SECRET: This three-metre reptile is one of the most feared snakes in Brazil, South America!
VENOM USED TO TREAT: High blood pressure

INDIAN COBRA

SNAKE SECRET: Protected by law, Indian cobras make their 'hoods' by expanding the ribs in their necks!
VENOM USED TO TREAT: Arthritis

KING COBRA

SNAKE SECRET: At 5.5 metres, the King cobra is the longest of all venomous snakes. Its hiss sounds like a growling dog!
VENOM USED TO TREAT: Extreme pain

AFRICAN SAW-SCALED VIPER

SNAKE SECRET: One of the most poisonous snakes in Africa, this biter has eye-shaped spots on its body.
VENOM USED TO TREAT: Heart attacks

SNAKES LIVED WITH DINOSAURS

Snakes slithered onto the scene more than 100 million years ago, when dinosaurs still roamed the Earth. More primitive snakes, such as boas and pythons, have traces of hind leg bones in their skeletons. This shows that they evolved from lizard-like animals with legs. Snakes lost their limbs over time, but because their bodies are on the ground, they can sense vibrations that tell them when food – or danger – is nearby.

SNAKES CAN'T HEAR

Snakes don't have external ears to hear sound waves in the air. Instead, bones in their lower jaw pick up vibrations in the ground or water. The vibes trigger signals in the snakes' brains, which are received as messages. Sss-super!

Is this a vine snake or an alien?!

SNAKES DON'T CHEW

Ever feel so hungry you could swallow a meal in one gulp? Well, a snake can! Its lower jawbone is hinged very loosely, so it can open its mouth really wide. Backward-curved teeth are designed to grab prey and move it down its throat, while elastic skin and loosely attached ribs expand as the food moves towards its stomach. Boas and other huge snakes can even eat goats and deer – after a big meal, snakes can go weeks without food!

Open wide for the sedge viper!

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