
VENOMOUS SNAKES, SHOULD THEY BE BRED?

In edition 5 of the current volume of *Litteratura Serpentina* we found in the programme for "snake-day" a clear manual concerning the carrying and/or dealing in venomous snakes. We think this is a first-class paper because in spite of considerable experience there are still frequent accidents with venomous snakes. You cannot be too careful with these animals and accident prevention is better than cure. Reading further, we found in the section "Supply and Demand" an advertisement in which captive bred juveniles of the venomous snake *Trimeresurus albolabris* were offered for the "give-away-price" of Dfl. 5.-. We assume that the vendor is having difficulty selling these animals, hence the price. We therefore wonder, if such snakes at give-away-prices may come into wrong (inexperienced) hands, thus creating potential problems. Although in principle, captive breeding of all snakes is welcome (this helps reduce importation of wild stocks), we think that it is necessary to ask ones' self if there are enough specific snake-keepers who keep venomous snakes to be found for such hatchlings. We must not forget that venomous snakes are not "beginners-snakes" like the cheaper species of, say, *Natrix* or *Thamnophis*. Owing to accidents with (venomous) snakes the already dubious "good name" of snake keepers only gets worse, so that problems with neighbours, landlords, local authorities, etc. are not imaginary. Within our letter we do not want to say something negative about the keeping of venomous snakes in general, but just wish to provoke thought as to whether breeding these species is always inadvisable. This would prevent situations such as there were in the past, for example with caimans, which were, so to speak, flushed through the toilet because people did not know what else to do with

these potentially dangerous animals as they grew larger.

Snakelovers Hay and Marleen de Bitter,
Kievitstraat 31,
5932 VM Tegelen.
The Netherlands.