

Snakebite_1994.txt

From: Nick.Plummer@med.umich.edu (Nicholas Plummer)

Newsgroups: rec.gardens

Subject: Snake Bites

Date: 21 May 1994 20:21:13 GMT

- > 1) treatment of snakebite, esp. copperheads; maintaining a reasonably
- > snake-free perimeter around a residence

IMHO, The first point in any FAQ about snakebite should be LEAVE THEM ALONE. The majority of snakes in North America are non venomous and are no threat. Most snakes are shy, and the venomous snakes are usually only a threat if you bother them. Some people are unlucky, but the vast majority of snake bites occur when someone tries to pick up, kill, or otherwise harass a venomous snake. If you actively try to exterminate snakes around your house or garden, you will increase your chances of being bitten.

That said, the only way I can think of to safely reduce the number of snakes like copperheads in an area is to (1) remove their hiding spots and (2) wipe out their food source. Many snakes spend the day hiding beneath objects, and I have found some very interesting specimens lurking under old plywood boards in vacant lots and junkpiles. Don't leave piles of brushwood, old boards, or corrugated metal near your home. You could try exterminating all the small mammals (mice, rats, etc) in the area, but personally, I wouldn't bother.

nick

nicholas plummer

nick.plummer@med.umich.edu

graduate slave, department of human genetics, university of michigan

Date: Mon, 23 May 1994 09:23:00 -0400

From: "david (d.c.) cromwell" <cromwell@bnr.ca>

Snakebite_1994.txt

|> Summary: need faq info on other poisonous animals for rec.gardens archives

Here are some old sci.med posts on the brown recluse and snakebite. Also, you might want to check in the rec.backcountry faq for more info on snakebite.

David

Article 35744 of sci.med:

From: Steven_Turchen@SANDMAIL.UCSD.EDU

Newsgroups: sci.med

Subject: Snake bite death, New Mexico

Date: 6 Nov 1993 10:35:17 -0600

Sender: daemon@cs.utexas.edu

1. Rattlesnakes can cause fatal bites with minimal or no evident swelling or discoloration at the bite site. I remember some pictures from a post-mortem on a woman who had been bitten on the buttock by an unknown rattlesnake in Florida (certainly NOT a Mojave). She had a small puncture wound she thought she got from a thorn. It was seen by a physician some hours after the bite who thought it unremarkable. She died some hours later. Photos of the bite area showed no apparent edema or discoloration. Dissection of the area revealed that the snake venom had digested the muscle of her buttock and thigh. She had had some pain ante-mortem, but apparently not so severe as to be inconsistent with a thorn puncture, but she had been drinking. I recall a case we had locally of a child with very mild local edema and a tiny puncture. It was misdiagnosed as a bee sting initially. The child subsequently became quite symptomatic 5 or 6 hours out. We recently had a case

Snakebite_1994.txt

involving another child with a very superficial bite and NO swelling, pain or discoloration. The E.D. doc wanted to discharge the child. We suggested he observe the child a bit longer and check platelets and coags. The child developed severe coagulopathy and required a lot of antivenin. My experience is that most people bitten by Croatalid snakes develop local symptoms quickly, but that the absence of local symptoms does not rule out the possibility of severe toxicity. On the other hand, I have never heard of a case of severe envenomation without a visible break in the skin. This is often a superficial scratch or a single puncture wound.

2. Snake allergy

People occasionally (usually after repeat exposure) develop severe allergy to snake venom. I know of one case that I seem to remember was fatal. This is quite rare. Usually the antivenin is much more of a problem in this sense.

3. Treatment

I think your document recommended constriction bands for treating snake bite. I would never use one, in fact, I believe the American College of Emergency Physicians recommends NEVER using them. Problems with constriction bands are that advancing edema can quickly turn them into a tourniquet, that trapping a toxin that digests tissue in a small area may be more harmful than allowing it to dilute itself, and that at the moment the band is removed a large amount of venom and tissue breakdown products can rapidly enter the circulation, much more rapidly than had distribution not initially been interfered with. Some authors recommend not removing such a band until antivenin has been started because of the hazards associated with this phenomenon. My own feeling is the best first aid is to get the person to a hospital.

Snakebite_1994.txt

4. getting more information on the New Mexico case
Have you called the New Mexico Poison center? Call their
non-emergency line and explain your concern and they may be
able to provide more information.

Steven Turchen
San Diego Regional Poison Center
sturchen@ucsd.edu

Newsgroups: sci.med
From: scd@atria.com (Steve Daukas)
Subject: Re: Snake bite death, New Mexico
Date: Mon, 8 Nov 1993 13:50:11 GMT

Steven_Turchen@SANDMAIL.UCSD.EDU wrote:

: 3.Treatment
: I think your document recommended constriction bands for
: treating snake bite. I would never use one, in fact, I
: believe the American College of Emergency Physicians
: recommends NEVER using them.

This is not true, at least as of January 1993 when I took my last refresher.
The curriculum for EMTs from the National Registry of Emergency Medical
Technicians, with respect to bites, include constriction bands as recommended
by the College of Emergency Physicians (at least that is what the information
claimed). Also, the two texts that I use for Paramedic Practice (published
recently) both list constriction bands as recommended by not just the
authors, but by the DOT and CEP, along with keeping the limb still, lower than
heart, etc., etc.. What you point out about swelling is true and is also
discussed in all of the literature I have ever seen. What is also discussed is
rapid transport.

Snakebite_1994.txt

: Problems with constriction bands
:
: are that advancing edema can quickly turn them into a
:
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: started because of the hazards associated with this
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: phenomenon. My own feeling is the best first aid is to get
:
: the person to a hospital.

Besides all of the above, local protocol dictates what can and can't be done with constricting bands and tournies. I have been under differing protocols where different policies are in force, many times by adjacent municipalities. Sometime, what makes perfectly good medical sence is not allowed...

Regards,
Steve

--

Stephen C. Daukas	Internet: scd@atria.com
Technical Marketing Manager	INternet: ...!uunet!gw!scd
Atria Software, Inc.	CompuServe: 72420,2261
24 Prime Park Way	Voice: (508) 650-5145
Natick, Ma. 01760	Fax: (508) 650-1196

From tonyp@convex.COM Thu Jun 16 22:34:20 EDT 1994
Article: 9769 of misc.rural
Path: bigblue.oit.unc.edu!concert!news.duke.edu!convex!usenet
From: <tonyp@cnvsla.COM> (The honey bunny)

Snakebite_1994.txt

Newsgroups: misc.rural
Subject: Re: spiders,
Date: 15 Jun 1994 16:32:47 GMT
Organization: CONVEX Computer Corp, Richardson, TX USA
Lines: 41
Message-ID: <2tnaff\$7gi@convex.convex.com>
References: <CrEt4v.I0q@yuma.acns.colostate.edu>
Reply-To: tonyp@convex.COM
NNTP-Posting-Host: cnvsla.convex.com

In article <CrEt4v.I0q@yuma.acns.colostate.edu>,
Wendy Richardson <wendy@lamar.ColoState.EDU> wrote:
>I found a big black widow spider near the house this weekend,
>which I promptly had my partner kill.
>
>If I've found one, does that mean there are probably more?
>
> She was probably guarding an eggsack. Did you look for one?
>
>What does one do for a bite?
>
> You are going to be soooooo sorry for about 3 days. BW's
> poison is a neuro-toxin and gets into the muscles. You are
> going to be sore. Really sore. If you are healthy you won't
> die, but for 3 days you're gonna wish you did! :-)

> To get fully accurate information, call your local hospital
> or Poison Control Center, let them know THIS IS *>NOT<* I REPEAT
> *>NOT<* AN EMERGENCY, and talk to one of the people there.

> If you have any other poisonous creatures in your area you might
> ask for "what to do" if you engage one of them.

[story mode ON]

Snakebite_1994.txt

When I moved to Valley Center (up in the mountains of San Diego) I called Poison Control to talk about rattle snakes and BWs and Tarantulas. While talking about the rattlers the PC guy told me that 90% of all rattle snake bites (they get) are on the hand, and 100% of the victims have a "high" blood-alcohol content. Seems that alot of people see these things and say "wow - what a great BELT that would make!" :-)

They strike with lightening speed. A mongoose can take on a Cobra, but wouldn't stand a chance against a rattler.

--

Tony J. Podrasky I have a fox fur coat: It's beautiful! - It's warm, it's
tonyp@convex.com soft, it's cuddly. If you stroke it - it gets playful
San Diego , Ca and nips at you. You see, it's being worn by the original
QSL? QRU? QRZ? owner - which is the way it should be. - tony j. podrasky

From johnk@saucer.cc.umn.edu Thu Jun 16 23:01:40 EDT 1994

Article: 35074 of rec.gardens

Newsgroups: rec.gardens

Path:

bigblue.oit.unc.edu!concert!news-feed-1.peachnet.edu!gatech!howland.reston.ans.net!vixen.cso.uiuc.edu!moe.ksu.ksu.edu!usenet-feed.umn.edu!saucer.cc.umn.edu!johnk

From: johnk@saucer.cc.umn.edu (John King)

Subject: Re: No Snake Gardens

References: <16FCE14789.IF07174@vm.cc.latech.edu>

Date: Fri, 10 Jun 1994 20:08:14 GMT

Nntp-Posting-Host: saucer.cc.umn.edu

X-Newsreader: TIN [version 1.1 PL8]

Organization: University of Missouri-Rolla, Missouri's Technological University

Sender: cnews@umn.edu (UMR Usenet News Administration)

Message-ID: <1994Jun10.200814.13135@umn.edu>

Snakebite_1994.txt

Lines: 63

IF07174@vm.cc.latech.edu wrote:

: I have always had a phobia of snakes. Growing up in Central Louisiana, I
: encountered coral snakes (which lay eyes in rotting pine trees), several types
: of rattlers, and a stray moccasin or so. Always, with terror. When as a new
: gardener in Athens, Ga., I pulled out an 8-inch moccasin when weeding a bed, I

stuff deleted

: Countless green snakes, "ground rattlers," and coral snakes
: (one, 32 inches long) followed. The poisonous ones either I killed or got my
: husband to kill when our children were small or the snakes were really close to
: our house. The others, I learned to abide. And our faithful dog kept all at a
: distance and kept me alerted to a varmint's approach. I do not boast of it (nor
: am I ashamed) but I think that that first, mistaken kill made me realize I had
: the means to protect myself if matters demanded that.

:
: I know the services snakes perform. I know they are not all bad. But I also
: trust the La. Dept of Wildlife bulletin that noted that some are "vicious,"
: and
: I have seen a 32-inch coral snake within proximity of my exploring toddler.

I think that probably you have confused the coral snake with the banded
king snake. The coral snake is very poisonous (same type venom as a
cobra) but is very small, maybe 18 inches or less. Since it has a very
small mouth the most common location for bites is on the hands, especially
the webs between the fingers. Most folks are bit when digging in leaf
litter. If I recall correctly they eat bugs, maybe even slugs ;>)

The king snake on the other hand can grow to three or four feet. There
are two varieties, the banded and the speckled. The speckled is
greenish-black with yellowish dots. I once kept one as a pet; named it

Snakebite_1994.txt

in honor of my ex. The banded king snake has beautiful yellow, red and black bands around its body the same as a coral. The way to tell the difference, without picking it up and checking the size of the mouth, is to look at the order of the bands. If the red and yellow are together then it is a coral. If the red and yellow are separated by the black then it is the king snake. The line I learned as a kid was "red and yellow will kill a fellow".

For someone who hates snakes, the king snakes of either variety are your best friends. Their favorite food is other snakes. And unlike cats or dogs you do not have to worry about their getting bit, feeding, vet bills, etc.

BTW I also grew up in central Louisiana and having caught 100's of snakes I cannot say any species is "vicious". My definition of vicious could only apply to humans. The water moccasin aka cottonmouth moccasin can be aggressive and I never personally remember it giving up ground or retreating as other snakes will if given the chance. The moccasin or cottonmouth is found in or around water and is VERY dangerous. It can grow to five or 5.5 feet and has potent venom. And unlike the coral which is rare, the copperhead which will run, or the rattlers which will warn you of their proximity, the moccasin simply lies there and bites you if you get too close. If really agitated it will open its mouth revealing the white interior and hiss. The white interior of the mouth is the marker here. Lots of snakes live in the water but only the moccasin has the white mouth and is poisonous.

Just my \$0.02 worth.

johnk@umr.edu
zone 5.8

Snakebite_1994.txt

From london@calypso-2.oit.unc.edu Thu Jul 7 09:31:42 1994
Date: Wed, 6 Jul 1994 00:45:29 -0400
From: Larry London <london@calypso-2.oit.unc.edu>
To: london@sunsite.unc.edu

Newsgroups: misc.rural

Path:

bigblue.oit.unc.edu!concert!gatech!swrinde!elroy.jpl.nasa.gov!ncar!mimbres.cs.unm.edu!nmt.edu!baervan.nmt.edu!mart
ha

From: martha@baervan.nmt.edu (Martha Cather)

Subject: Re: Dressing for Snakes

Message-ID: <1994Jun24.174513.28398@nmt.edu>

Sender: news@nmt.edu (News software)

Nntp-Posting-Host: baervan

Organization: PRRC-New Mexico Tech, Socorro NM

References: <MS-C.772396993.2035015474.mrc@Ikkoku-Kan.Panda.COM> <arvesen.1541.000943EF@tivoli.com>

Date: Fri, 24 Jun 1994 17:45:13 GMT

Lines: 34

Ralph,

I live in rural NM, although fairly close to a small hospital (15 miles). Last summer, some visitors stopped in on a cross-country move, and the lady got out of her car and stepped on a small rattlesnake. It happened so quickly that although I saw the snake, I had no time to warn her and the snake had no opportunity to rattle. She was wearing very thin sandals and was bitten on the heel. We wrapped her leg in one of those freezable bandages you can keep around for horse leg injuries and packed her off to the hospital. They said that the best thing was to keep the victim calm, cool, get to the hospital, don't bother with the cut/turniquet (sp?) method at all, and usually not to apply ice, since they have more problems with frostbit snake bites!

Our visitor's ankle and foot swelled, and she had a rather miserable two weeks (they were moving from Tucson to Boston and had a rented truck that

Snakebite_1994.txt

she had to drive!), but no obvious lasting damage. She only required 2 vials of the antivenon, as the bite was not too serious, but the docs told her that had she been a child, they would have given her a much stronger dose, because the venom can do more damage to a child.

There was a fellow here about a month ago who decided to pick up a snake and take it home. The snake bit him through some leather gloves, and 15 minutes later the guy died. Apparently, he had some sort of unusual allergic reaction to the bite, and little anyone did could have helped.

When I go outside now in the summer, I am always aware of where I walk, and if it is at night, I always wear boots, just in case. Last year was a bad snake year, we had several around. This year I've only seen one, while we were out riding. Rode two horses right over the top of it without realizing where the damn thing was!

Martha in NM
email: martha@baervan.nmt.edu

From csmith@falcon.bgsu.edu Sun Oct 16 21:38:17 EDT 1994
From: csmith@falcon.bgsu.edu (Bob Smith)
Newsgroups: misc.rural
Subject: Re: Copperheads-need advice
Date: Thu, 6 Oct 1994 15:27:22

>do not want an endangered species to become more endangered, however, we are
>having some major problems with copperheads at our house and I would like
>some suggestions on how to irradiate them from the grounds.

A few months ago I posed the same questions here about copperheads and got a lot of good advise which I hope you get as well. We have a cabin in southern Kentucky and copperheads are prevalent there but we have seen none so far (knock on wood). Of the suggestions which seemed to be most helpful:

Snakebite_1994.txt

1. Walk your ground somewhat regularly and noisily from time to time. They don't like neighbors. Better yet, walk around with a running chainsaw or weed-whacker since they are sensitive to the vibrations of loud noises and will scatter. If they scatter long enough they'll eventually find a friendlier neighborhood elsewhere.
2. I think it was sulphur, which when poured in a line, that copperheads will not cross. Of course, you can either trap copperheads IN or OUT with this method.
3. Adopt a black snake and give it a good home on the property. Copperheads are prey to a blacksnake and while a blacksnake is large it is rather harmless to humans. It will clear copperheads and rodents. ALSO, CLEARING RODENTS AND TOADS FROM PROPERTY WILL ELIMINATE PART OF THE COPPERHEAD'S FOOD SUPPLY.
4. Adopt cats and dogs.
5. Tread heavily and carry a big stick. :)

Bob and Cathy Smith

Clearing the rodents will be enough, use cats to do this. Leave the toads to work the insects in your garden.

L.L.

From yost@ledger.co.forsyth.nc.us Sun Oct 16 21:40:56 EDT 1994

From: yost@ledger.co.forsyth.nc.us

Newsgroups: misc.rural

Subject: Re: Copperheads-need advice

Date: 12 Oct 94 11:17:47 EST

Snakebite_1994.txt

- > Does anyone know of any proven methods of eliminating copperheads from a
- > area or of any animals that specifically hunt out and kill the snakes?
- > The stump that the nest was under is only about 30 feet from our house

First of all, copperheads are very non aggressive snakes and fear is entirely unnecessary. Be alert but you can calm down a bit..

The stump is the key. Remove all wood, rotting stumps, slash piles and the like. In all my years of outdoor work, these and sawdust piles are the preferred nesting sites. Sawdust piles are not common around homes but if you have one I promise some copperheads will be some there. Cats are good for removing the food that copperheads like, which will force the snakes out.

These are the only two things that help, short of turning the place over with a bulldozer and shooting everything that moves)-:%

My advice is based on more copperhead experience that I care to mention.

```
+-----+-----+
| Spencer William Yost | Mis Department |
| Vax/VMS Systems Manager | Forsyth County Government |
| Yost@ledger.co.forsyth.nc.us | 200 N. Main St Room 603 |
| | Hall Of Justice |
| | Winston-Salem NC 27101 |
+-----+-----+
```

From jstrick@massive.its.bldrdoc.gov Fri May 19 00:05:48 EDT 1995
Article: 18050 of misc.rural
Newsgroups: misc.rural
Path: bigblue.oit.unc.edu!concert!gatech!ncar!massive!jstrick
From: jstrick@massive.its.bldrdoc.gov (John Stricklen)
Subject: Re: Snakes

Snakebite_1994.txt

Message-ID: <D8s863.38H@massive.its.bldrdoc.gov>
Date: Thu, 18 May 1995 16:22:50 GMT
References: <3peb4b\$dt@newsbf02.news.aol.com>
Organization: NTIA/ITS
Lines: 21

I can recommend a good book for identifying snakes: The Audobon Society Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians. It has lots of good color pictures and descriptions of the snakes (and others) including their habitats and ranges.

The "triangular head" theory is inexact and not very accurate and could get you into some trouble if you think something is not poisonous because its head is not quite triangular.

Snakes are really neat creatures (I have one for a pet and my four year old son has one also), but some of them are really not good to have around.

As for your black and white little snake, it could have been some sort of rattle-snake, but could have been some other kind as well. If it was acting that aggressive, you probably did the right thing to kill it (if you walk in that area a lot). Keep in mind that one hatchling probably comes with several others at the same time and in the same area.

Good luck and happy snaking!

John

From ellis@noao.edu Mon May 22 13:16:56 EDT 1995
Article: 18106 of misc.rural
Path: bigblue.oit.unc.edu!concert!news-server.ncren.net!taco.cc.ncsu.edu!gatech!ncar!noao!ellis
From: ellis@noao.edu (Tim Ellis)
Newsgroups: misc.rural

Snakebite_1994.txt

Subject: Re: Snakes

Date: 19 May 1995 19:36:38 GMT

Organization: National Optical Astronomy Observatories, Tucson, AZ, USA

Lines: 25

Distribution: world

Message-ID: <3pis06\$qsc@noao.edu>

References: <3peb4b\$dt@newsbf02.news.aol.com> <D8t1ws.7zA@boi.hp.com> <3pibv4\$ek1@bcrkh13.bnr.ca>

NNTP-Posting-Host: gemini.tuc.noao.edu

In article <3pibv4\$ek1@bcrkh13.bnr.ca> cathy@zorac.cary.nc.us writes:

>

>In article <D8t1ws.7zA@boi.hp.com>, ahill@boi.hp.com (Andy Hill) writes:

>> There are only four main types of poisonous snakes in NA, and they're all

>> quite easy to recognize (and not particularly dangerous, if you know

>> what you're doing).

>

> I believe one of those four is the coral snake, and it *is* particularly
> dangerous and can kill you before you can get to a doctor. It looks
> like a king snake, but has a different banding pattern.

> The other three (copperhead, cottonmouth/water moccasin, rattlesnake)
> are much less poisonous and unlikely to be fatal to adults who receive
> reasonable medical care.

>

Whoa now.... hold on there.... Have you ever heard of the Mojave Rattlesnake?
That charming critter is not only ornery, but it's venom is more potent than
that of the cobra... In addition there are a number of horse fatalities that
I'm aware of that can be attributed to Mojave bites....

Just thought you might like to know...

tim ellis

Snakebite_1994.txt