

Homeowner's Guide to Exotic Reptiles



What can you do to help control exotic reptiles in Sarasota County?

- If you see an exotic reptile (e.g.: iguana, monitor, python), call the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or fill out a sighting form found on the county's Exotic Reptile website to report it. This information will be used to map and monitor the population as well as identify opportunities to control the spread of exotic non-native reptiles.
- Do not install landscape plants that are known to attract certain exotic reptiles such as iguanas, or consider removing them if they are currently in your landscape. For example: hibiscus, orchids, impatiens, roses, garden greens, squashes, berries, figs, mangos, tomatoes, and many other flowers are known to be eaten by iguanas.
- If you want to keep your plants and help control these animals, protect your favorite plants with enclosures and netting. Otherwise, they may become a reptile snack.
- When considering the purchase of an exotic reptile for a pet, know the facts. How big will it be? What does it eat? How much space do I need to house it? Will I still be able to care for it when it's fully grown? Often these realities are not fully understood at the time of purchase and the pet soon becomes an unwanted burden that the owner does not know how to handle.
- Do not release unwanted pets into the wild. Not only is this against the law in the state of Florida, it adds to the problem of exotic animals spreading and competing with our native animals for resources. In addition, it is also cruel to the animal released, as it must then fend for itself in the wild in unfamiliar territory.
- As with dogs and cats, you can get a microchip for your reptile. If it gets out and is found later, this microchip will enable Sarasota County Animal Services to return it to you.
- If you have an exotic reptile that you can no longer care for, you may surrender it to Animal Services. You may also consider contacting your veterinarian for other options.

