

Please Don't Kill Snakes



Snakes make a significant contribution to the control of pests such as rats and insects. They will generally only bite if provoked so instead of killing them just shoo them gently and they will move on. If there is a snake on your property, don't kill it; rather contact the snake catcher, Sarel van der Merwe at:

082 683 1604 or 039 315 0233

Only eight South African species are highly venomous, and most are ***just as afraid of you as you are of them***. It therefore makes sense to have some basic knowledge of the different species since far too many non-venomous serpents are simply taken out by those with a 'any snake is a bad snake' attitude. A typical example is the confusion between the harmless Natal green snake and the Green Mamba.



Green mamba, family of black mamba but smaller, highly venomous, live in trees. Grass green in colour but yellow when born



The **Natal green snake** is totally harmless and is very common and does well in close proximity to humans. Can be targeted and killed out of fear as it is often confused with the shier but highly venomous green mamba.

Awareness and knowing what to do are always the key to protecting you and your family from being bitten.

The nearest medical facility which keeps anti-venom is Port Shepstone.

What to do if you are bitten

- Remain calm. Stress and fear increase blood flow, spreading the venom more rapidly.
- Try to remember what it looks like so you can identify the type of snake from the pictures
- In the emergency room. Remove jewellery or shoes that may pose a problem as the bite area swells.
- Keep still.
- Always keep the bitten limb below the heart, as it slows blood flow and the spread of venom. Get to the nearest hospital as quickly as possible.
- Call the hospital en route to inform them of your arrival.

What not to do

- Do not give the victim anything to eat or drink; Place the affected area in ice;
- Make any cuts or apply suction to the area;
- Attempt to give anti venom; or administer pain or anti-anxiety medications.

Some Venomous snakes include:

Black Mamba

The deadliest and the longest, reaching up to 14 feet in length, streamlined with a narrow, coffin-shaped head and smooth scales. The back is uniform gunmetal to olive-brown, but never really black; the belly is pale grey-green, sometimes with dark blotches and the mouth lining is black.



Green Mamba

Is a large tree-dwelling venomous snake with a coffin-shaped head. They occur within 10km of the sea along the KZN coast. Not to be confused with the non-venomous green snake with spots.



Puff Adders

One of the largest vipers, slow-moving excitable and hiss loudly or puff when disturbed. This heavily built snake has a large, flattened, triangular head and large nostrils.



Boomslang

This can be green or brown but in some areas, the males are Black and yellow. It has rough scales above and has massive eyes.



Cobras

Best identified by their unique feature of flaring their hoods when agitated.



Reference: Sarel van der Merwe : 082 683 1604 / 039 315 0233