

## Reptile Show Tails

By Kristin Van Alstine

January 30, 2009

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Reptile shows offer hundreds of different species and morphs to choose from.

Before buying any animal, you should also consider if it fits into your lifestyle, and for larger animals, your home, once it reaches its full grown size.

Ogre Rulz!, 'nuff said...If you are looking for the opportunity to see every possible herp (reptile or amphibian) imaginable or talk to others who share your love for this hobby, then a reptile show is the place for you. There are many great reasons to visit one, and with today's surge in the popularity of herps as pets, there are more and more of them showing up all over the country.

My favorite part of the shows, of course, is the animals. There are hundreds of different species and morphs to choose from -- both the common and the exotic. Many are suitable for beginners, others are only recommended for the most experienced of herpers, and everything in between. In fact, every time that I have been to a show, I have seen some new species that I have never laid eyes on before.

Along with all of the herps available, the show that I go to regularly in Illinois also has reptile supplies; frozen and live rodents, feeder insects, cages and habitats, live plants, herp related clothing and other items, even jewelry and more. Other animals are sold as well, including arachnids, dogs, birds, even hedgehogs and other small animals. At my last visit to the show, I bought handmade jewelry and a baby Mexican Red Rump Tarantula, also referred to as a spiderling, from one of the sellers regularly there named Ogre. This adds pet number 20 to my list of animals at home.

Another fun thing at reptile shows is getting the opportunity to interact with reptile breeders and other hobbyists. There is a wealth of knowledge available here and much to learn from those who earn a living from the hobby and also from people who attend the shows. It can be very rewarding to share personal experiences and advice with others, and not have to only depend on books and websites for everything there is to know about a species.

National and local organizations, and societies and clubs are often present at shows. Some of the larger events even have guest speakers and presentations as well. It can be an excellent way to find herpetological and other special interest groups in your area that you can get involved with.

However, the huge variety of pets at very low prices can tempt people into making impulse purchases, when they find that special herp that they can't seem to live without. Knowing everything pertinent about the animal before buying is crucial. It is vital to research the requirements of the species if you are unfamiliar with it, including the cost involved, and the time commitment needed for its care. Before buying any animal, you should also consider if it fits into your lifestyle, and for larger animals, your home, once it reaches its full grown size. Also, determining if it can then be safely handled is paramount. Impulse buying can lead to someone having an animal that can no longer be cared for, or the neglect or abandonment of the animal by irresponsible owners. Relying on the information of a seller alone can be misleading also, as sometimes their intent is just to sell the animal, glossing over any issues, special costly requirements or the true size that the animal will reach. Just take a look around a reptile show, and you will see huge snakes and lizards for sale for very low prices, because they can't take care of them any more or didn't know what they were getting into with a very large and aggressive animal.

Once you have decided that a particular herp might be right for you but still need to do some more research, you can be confident that there will always be another reptile show, or you can even get the breeder's information, and buy from them down the road when you are ready. A good breeder recognizes that the education on the proper care of the animal is more important than the individual sale.

So, with many great reasons to attend a show, but being sure to avoid the temptation of impulse buying, I strongly recommend that everyone visit a reptile show, to experience all that they have to offer. You may just have a very special toad hop off of a table and into your life.

-The Toad Talker

[Back to Blogs>>](#)