

Reptile Awareness Day 2009

What is Reptile Awareness Day, and what are people doing for it?

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For some people in the herp community and beyond, Oct. 21 is R.A.D. Annually people deem the 294th day of the year (295th in a leap year) Reptile Awareness Day.

REPTILES magazine wasn't able to determine how this day became R.A.D., and there doesn't seem to be an official designation, but some schools, animal hospitals, pet stores and other animal-centric organizations recognize the day to promote reptile education, conservation and appreciation.

Reptile Awareness Day has even been mentioned on the television show *The Simpsons*. A tearaway calendar featured in "Kill Gil, Volumes I & II," the ninth episode of season 18, includes the day.

Individual herpkeepers also have picked up the R.A.D. cause. Some shared their past deeds or future plans on the REPTILES magazine Facebook page. Siobhan Sprouse wrote that she has taken pets to local pet stores and "let people touch them and see that they're not the bloodthirsty monsters they're portrayed as." Taly Eddington had a different idea for Oct. 21. "I might take my ball python out for a day around town," she wrote.

Other herpkeepers have spoken to local media to drum up support for Reptile Awareness Day. Jesse Rothacker, president of Forgotten Friend Reptile Sanctuary in Lancaster County, Pa., is one. With an albino Burmese python in tow, he visited nearby television stations and print publications to promote Reptile Awareness Day and responsible pet ownership. The sanctuary is also holding a R.A.D. contest to celebrate the day.

What can you do on Reptile Awareness Day? Find 10 suggestions and a contest with prizes on ReptileChannel.com.