SNAKES: a very useful addition to any garden. Both beneficial and garden snakes are common in Canada. Their major predators are birds, bats, snakes, birds of prey, and humans.

Most of Canada's snakes are non-aggressive and do not bite unless handled or disturbed. They are beneficial, feeding on insects, rodents, and small mammals. Garden snakes occur in both agricultural land and urban areas. They eat small animals such as mice, voles, and garden pests. Garden snakes are beneficial in controlling rodent populations and are often seen in gardens and parks.

Eastern Fox Snake (Lampropeltis triangulum): a long (85 to 1.7m), yellow or pale eastern fox snake. It has large light brown or yellow spots on the back and sides of the neck. There may sometimes be a light brown or yellow blotch on the back of the neck. In its belly, it has a black and ochre stripe. It has two dark stripes along its back, a dark strip low on each side and a red or orange belly.

Favourite prey: small mammals, small birds, large insects, occasionally small lizards.

Range: extends from the northern extremes of the United States to southern Canada.

Habitat: edges of wooded areas.

Northern Rattlesnake (Crotalus viridis): a large (85 to 1.7m), yellow or light brown snake. It has three light brown or yellow spots on the back and sides of the neck. There may sometimes be a light brown or yellow blotch on the back of the neck. It has a light brown or yellow blotch on the back of the neck. In its belly, it has a black and ochre stripe. It has two dark stripes along its back, a dark strip low on each side and a red or orange belly.

Favourite prey: small mammals, small birds, large insects, occasionally small lizards.

Range: extends from the northern extremes of the United States to southern Canada.

Habitat: edges of wooded areas.

Garter Snakes: a short (40 to 60cm), slender snake. It is light to dark brown. Young smooth green snakes are darker in colouring. The queen snake is a short (40 to 60cm), slender snake. It is light to dark brown. Young smooth green snakes are darker in colouring.

Favourite prey: slugs, insects, small fish, small crustaceans, slugs, and snails.

Range: from the northwestern territories to southern Ontario.

Habitat: grasslands, open forest, usually under rocks or logs.

Smaller snakes are more sedentary and less active than larger species. The most common garter snake is the southern garter snake. It is a medium-sized (40 to 60cm), slender snake. It is light to dark brown. Young smooth green snakes are darker in colouring.

Favourite prey: slugs, insects, small fish, small crustaceans, slugs, and snails.

Range: from the northwestern territories to southern Ontario.

Habitat: grasslands, open forest, usually under rocks or logs.

Southern Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan.

Western Rattlesnake (Crotalus viridis): a long (85 to 1.7m), yellow-brown or light brown snake. It has three light brown or yellow spots on the back and sides of the neck. There may sometimes be a light brown or yellow blotch on the back of the neck. In its belly, it has a black and ochre stripe. It has two dark stripes along its back, a dark strip low on each side and a red or orange belly.

Favourite prey: small mammals, small birds, large insects, occasionally small lizards.

Range: extends from the northern extremes of the United States to southern Canada.

Habitat: edges of wooded areas.

Smooth Green Snake (Opheodrys vernalis): yellow or light yellow snake. It has three light brown or yellow spots on the back and sides of the neck. There may sometimes be a light brown or yellow blotch on the back of the neck. In its belly, it has a black and ochre stripe. It has two dark stripes along its back, a dark strip low on each side and a red or orange belly.

Favourite prey: small mammals, small birds, large insects, occasionally small lizards.

Range: extends from the northern extremes of the United States to southern Canada.

Habitat: edges of wooded areas.