

Reptiles the perfect pets for Uxbridge area resident

As a youngster in his native Orillia, Uxbridge-area resident Jason Brock was forever catching turtles and frogs. He didn't torment them, but studied them with great interest.

As he grew older, his attraction to reptiles as pets was a source of disagreement between he and his mother, who banned the creatures from the house.

Now that he's out on his own, the 19-year-old baker has realized his dream of having a house full of snakes, iguanas and turtles of every description.

And if everything goes according to plan, Jason will some day be the custodian of a reptile farm.

His home is an endless collection of cages and fish tanks. His pets include an albino corn

snake, a Chinese soft shell turtle, a Nile monitor, a Cayman alligator and a Burmese python which will one day grow to 21 feet.

"I always wanted reptiles as pets," notes Jason. "But Mom would have no part of it. So I moved out and my collection started with a turtle, some fish, an iguana and a small alligator."

Jason then started his own business, selling reptiles in the Orillia area.

But now he just wants to raise them for himself and is looking to acquire two of each species for breeding purposes. He can quickly offer nutshell summations on the habits and characteristics of dumpy tree frogs, gecko lizards, Cayman green iguanas or his three-toed box turtles.

Most of his reptiles are still young, so while he is able to

feed the entire lot for around \$20 each week, he realizes he will some day have to increase both his food budget and the area in which his pets live.

"When that time comes, hopefully, I'll own my own house and I'll just let them run around loose," he says.

But for now, he's enjoying his friends' company.

A lizard and an iguana are free to come and go in his bedroom and he's comfortable handling most of the reptiles.

However, there are dangers, he says, and his pets can be a sensitive bunch.

"They never attack, especially after they've been in the house for more than a day," he notes. "But you still have to be careful. I've had fingers bitten."

Jason says he will invariably get a reaction when he takes one of his pets outside.

"When I walk down the street with my iguana on my shoulder, people stop in their cars to look," he says.

And, predictably, many people are afraid to come near his home.

"One lady wouldn't come to my place to cut my hair when she found out I had reptiles," he noted. "And my grandfather won't come over. It's mainly the snakes that bother people."

Jason says his reptiles eventually come to know him and that he has no fear of his pets.

He tries to constantly upgrade his knowledge of the creatures by reading books, watching nature shows on television and by studying magazines that deal with reptiles.

"I was going to do the pet shop thing, but decided I would rather have a reptile farm one day," he says. "That way, I can have greenhouses full of them."

In the meantime, Jason will continue to share his own living quarters with a strange assortment of snakes, iguanas and Australian tree frogs.



Uxbridge area resident Jason Brock has a keen interest in all things scaly. He has an assortment of unusual pets including lizards, snakes and turtles and one day wants to operate a reptile farm.

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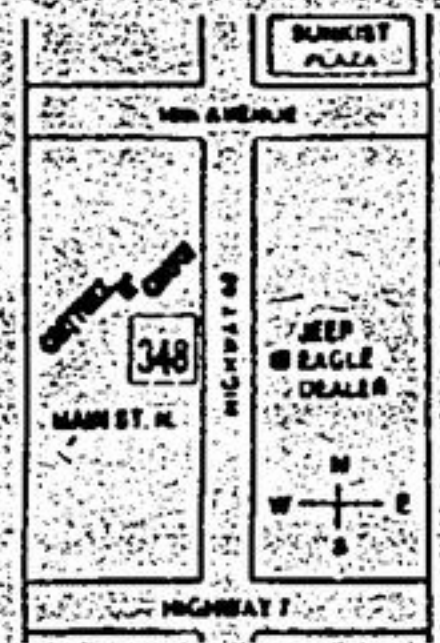
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