MID~JULY, 2013 ANTICIPATED AVAILABILITY

Palmetto (no aka)Most Commonly Used Name: Palmetto
Mode of Genetic Inheritance: Recessive to Wild-type
Morph Type: Simple recessive mutationEye Color:
Black pupil and silver iris

First *and FOREMOST*, I want to publicly thank Daryl Camby, the person who made it possible for me to own this beautiful wild-caught corn snake.

Status of the Palmetto in the marketplace:
The adult male we have that was captured in the wilds of South Carolina in 2008 is the only one known to exist and at this time, and SMR is the only place in the world where Palmetto Corns exist at this time.

PRICE ?
Even though Palmettos are listed with the 2012 Hatchlings, none will be sold this year. In 2012, we began selling Palmettos for $4,000.00 USD each, but only females are being offered. Heterozygous females began selling in 2012 for $2,000.00 USD each and no males of any color are being sold until 2015, or later. This is in an effort to break the corn snake market trend of over-producing rare morphs, only to have their market values plummet from supplies that exceed demand. In 2011, the patriarch male was bred to three females only (normal corns Het for Palmetto), so you can see that I'm not on a mission to produce buckets of Palmettos in the coming years. My promise to those who invest in this unique morph is that I will not be the first (or second – or third) to lower their price. You may count on SMR holding the $4,000.00 price LONGER than other future producers. At the time of that publication, we are managing a chronological list of Palmetto customers. In the order in which they were ordered, once we begin offering male Palmettos, those who previously bought females will be offered males first. After those patrons are served, if any males are left, they will be sold at large. We anticipate selling male homozygotes and heterozygotes in 2015, but it's remotely possible that we may wait until 2016.

Update – July 6, 2011 :
After 62 DAYs of incubation at an average (and nearly constant) 82.4° F. the first captive-produced Palmetto was born (emerged from her egg) toDAY – July 6, 2011, at 6:25 pm, cdt. She spans 10.6″ in length and tips the scales at a whopping 6 grams (later weighed at 5 greams – after yolk digestion). It's difficult to say how much like her wild-caught father she will be at maturity, but her general appearance is just what I'd imagine her father to have been when he was her age. Five of the 13 eggs in her brood yielded Palmettos, and the rest are visual normals. All five Palmettos are virtual clones of each other, possessing nearly the same disbursement of color flecking seen on their father, but of course, each is unique regarding color flecking locations – not unlike unique fingerprints on humans. We're naturally pleased to announce that Palmettos are officially gene mutants that are recessively inherited. We'll post more pictures as our Palmetto family grows.

How the Palmetto got its name:
A perfectly natural trend exists in herpetoculture toDAY to sometimes hastily assign *hopefully unique* names to newly-discovered mutations or traits, but in the haste that often drives such assignments – *usually via desire to be the first to name the new morph* – insufficient consideration is given to the potential that the bulk of the phenotypes of the new morph may not have immediate and parallel association with the new name. Historically, in our hobby, upon reading the name of a new corn snake morph, one should conjure a mental expectation before seeing it, and if that expectation is met, the morph will usually be successful in the marketplace. Because of the highly colorful nature of corn snake mutations and their selective variants, namesakes are usually colors, fruits, or candies. If the person naming the morph did his/her homework, the chosen names are accurate most of the time, but sometimes, it is discovered that not enough individuals were examined prior to naming. This can result in the new morph name not accurately reflecting the appearance of most members of that morph. In the absence of a regulating entity governing such name

assignments, and because patents are not granted for corn snake morphs, anyone can assign names to corn snake morphs that they discover. As it usually is with any product, success is ultimately dictated by the consumers. If they like the name, it sticks. This is notably demonstrated when two or more people producing the same morph have assigned different names to it. One of those names usually wins out over the other(s), but there are cases where more than one name applies to the same morph, and a *descriptor* denotes the genetic family (usually the name of the respective gene/trait discoverer).

I labored over many names I thought would be perfect for this exciting and new morph – and some that could be adequate – but most were already assigned to other corn snake morphs. Keeping in mind that this particular snake may look less like a chosen namesake than its descendants, I was dubious about using a color, pattern, or familiar and commonly recognizable namesake. Therefore, in favor of a name that did not require a mental or visual association – I Palmetto was assigned to this beautiful corn snake. Of course, the name is associated with the state in which this snake was captured; South Carolina (aka:*The Palmetto State*).

How can you be sure this is a corn, Don?
Most reptile mutants have features that are anomalous to their nominate forms, and such anomalies can be beyond the obvious habitat ranges and color & pattern features that normally distinguish them. Of course, not unlike theLeucistic Rat Snake that lacks any color or pattern resemblance to its species phenotype, the color and pattern of the Palmetto looks nothing like its nominate form. Other than telling you that this snake was viewed by many corn snake keepers and breeders at one or more reptile shows prior to my acquisition, and was thoroughly and painstakingly photographed by Bill Love of Blue Chameleon Ventures, I have closely compared the Palmetto's anatomical features to those of Corn Snakes (*Pantherophis guttatus*) and the only U.S. Rat Snakes found where this one was captured – (Black and Yellow Rat Snakes; *Pantherophis obsoletus obsoletus* and *Pantherophis obsoletus quadrivittata*). In that those are the only two U.S. Rat Snake species that naturally occur in SC, all Rat Snake references hereafter in the Palmetto morph discussion refer collectively to Black Rats and Yellow Rats – unless otherwise noted.

The Palmetto's anal plate is divided like both Corn Snake and Rat Snake species, dorsal and lateral scales that are keeled conform more to Corns than Rat Snakes (even though scale keeling is variable in captive-bred individuals of both species), the larger radius of The Palmetto's ventral keel is like that of the Corn, vs. the sharper ventral keel of the Rat Snake, facial scales are generally shaped more like a Corn than a Rat Snake (count ranges are essentially the same for both species), and the Palmetto's 70 subcaudal scale count barely overlaps the 63-90 count of the Black Rat Snake (not rare), but is well below the 75-102 count for Yellow Rat Snakes (*P. o. quadrivittata*) – thereby largely eliminating the Yellow Rat Snake as a genetic donor. Bear in mind that other than average adult size and DNA comparisons from reliable baseline samples, the primary distinction between Corn Snakes and the SC Rat Snakes is in the realm of appearance (color and pattern schemes), so when a mutation dramatically deviates from a species' appearance standards, cousin species like Corns and Rat Snakes are sometimes difficult to differentiate. Since temperament can be respectively anomalous in either of these species (some corns may perpetually bite and some Rat Snakes can be reliably friendly to humans), it is not reliable to attempt distinction in this realm. Distinguishing between two species that have similar scalation can sometimes be challenging, since they may overlap each others' scale-count ranges (as is the case here). Likewise, exceptions in the realm of size in either species is inherent in both Corns and North American Rat Snakes (there are adult Corns larger than the average SC Rat Snake and vice-versa). Based on these observations, in my experienced opinion (and that of several other veteran Rat and Corn Snake keepers), the Palmetto is a corn snake. It may well be the first leucistic-type mutation to be discovered in corns; albeit historically unusual looking for a leucistic serpent – with its' predictable color flecking, never seen in North American Rat Snakes. Until we see more examples of Palmettos, we will not know the

general appearance of this morph, but so far (as of July 8, 2011) the five F^2 visual Palmettos are remarkably consistent in appearance to the original patriarch (adult pictured above). The eyes certainly are like most leucistic serpent mutants, as are the predominant white scalation. Many Leucistic Rat Snakes have one (or a scant few) “smudges” of color on them, but far fewer than the first five captive specimens exhibit, and those color anomalies are generally much smaller than seen on this Palmetto. It is rare to see more than one or two such color smudges on Leucistic Black or Texas Rat Snakes, and as you can see on Palmettos, there are dozens (if not hundreds) of scales that have deeply defined colors AND far too many color smudges like the few that are seen on some Leucistic Rat Snakes. Among the many hundreds of Leucistic Texas and Black Rat Snakes I’ve produced and seen in the industry, I estimate that only one of every ten of them have color anomalies (smudges), and at least three times rarer are ones that have more than one small color smudge.

Hatchling Size:
The second clutch of eggs that hatched in 2011 yielded the following length and weight vital statistics:

Palmetto Hatchling # 1 = 9.2 in (23.4cm) and 5 grams
Palmetto Hatchling # 2 = 8.7 in (23.4cm) and 4 grams
Palmetto Hatchling # 3 = 8.9 in (22.1cm) and 4 grams
Palmetto Hatchling # 4 = 9.2 in (23.4cm) and 4 grams
Palmetto Hatchling # 5 = 8.8 in (22.4cm) and 4 grams
Palmetto Hatchling # 6 = 9.2 in (23.4cm) and 4 grams
Normal – Heterozygote Hatchling # 7 = 9.3 in (23.6cm) and 4 grams
Normal – Heterozygote Hatchling # 8 = 8.2 in (20.8cm) and 4 grams
Normal – Heterozygote Hatchling # 9 = 9.4 in (23.9cm) and 4 grams
Normal – Heterozygote Hatchling #10 = 9.0 in (22.9cm) and 4 grams
Normal – Heterozygote Hatchling #11 = 8.6 in (21.8cm) and 4 grams

As cited above, all are slightly under the average size for a hatchling corn snake and far below the averages for most SC Rat Snakes.