Whew, where do I begin? The subject of these comparative photos concerns the distinction between Striped corns and Striped Tessera corns. I'm going to explain to you why I claim that these are both Striped-type Butter Tesseras, but I have no empirical proof that they actually are.

First, both of these 2013 hatchlings will mature to be two shades of yellow (with no brown or orange), and the darker colors you see on one of these has nothing to do with it being a Tessera. Anyone breeding Butter corns will attest to the fact that brown or orange markings in neonatal Butters turn yellow with age. Upon first glance, we're tempted to say that the dark one satisfies the visual standard for a Striped Butter Motley, while the other one satisfies that of a Striped Butter. The darker of these two Butters has the classically wider dorso-lateral striped markings that we typically see on Striped Motleys, and the paler of these snakes has the much narrower dorso-lateral striped markings, common to virtually all Striped corns. Inversely, the yellow ground-color zone between striped markings is the opposite: wider on the Striped mutant and narrower on the Striped Motley mutant. So, what makes me call both of these Tesseras? I identify both of these as Tesseras because the stripes on the darker one extend from the neck to the tail tip, and the stripes on the lighter one begin to fade without the intermittent dots or dashes that we see on most Striped corn snake mutants. The paler of the two satisfies the loose standard for a Vanishing Striped corn, but without the usual dots and dashes after the stripe fades. Also, having no dorsal "tweener" markings (ovals, circles, bowties, rectangles) between or after the stripes subside *indicates* that it is a Tessera. When the stripe of a Tessera breaks, it always starts up again and finally does not end up in dots or dashes; when stripes of non-Tesseras start to break up, what follows the dots and dashes is usually no markings at all. Even if there are no stripe breaks in non-Tessera Striped corns, the stripe never extends to the tail tip.

Recently, there has been speculation that–as we see in non-Tessera pattern mutants–the darker of these two Butters is probably a Striped Butter Motley Tessera (aka: Pin-striped Motley Tessera), while the other is a Striped Butter Tessera corn. You're saying right now, "*well, no kiddin, Don, of course, that's obvious*", but until now, I'm not sure anyone had performed Tessera breeding trials to prove this picture positively demonstrates the visual distinction between the two. Since Tessera has so many genetic attributes (direct and collateral) that are new in corn snake mutations, it is *not* a foregone conclusion that there would be a parallel between Motley and Striped mutants *and* their Tessera counterparts. We often see Striped Motleys (that are not Tesseras) having very long and contiguous striping, but to my knowledge, none has ever had stripes contiguously extended to the tail tip. The very best stripes of virtually all of them break before reaching the tail and do not resume. Some Tesseras also break at the tail, but even *if* the stripes of Tesseras break before the tail, they virtually always start up again on the tail – in some striped fashion. That's something few (if any) non-Tessera Striped Motleys have ever done. If the darker of these two is a Striped Motley Tessera, one thing we can see is that the phenotype does not include the lateral tessellation common to regular Tesseras and responsible for their name: Tessera.

Until we identify reliable markers on Tesseras, easily distinguishing between Striped Tesseras, Striped Motley Tesseras, and their non-Tessera pattern mutant siblings is surely not 100% accurate. Knock on wood, but *so far*, every Tessera I've produced and sold as a Striped Tessera was either a Striped Tessera or Striped Motley Tessera. Therefore, *so far*, the tried and trusted evaluation of stripe quality and contiguity has been a reasonably reliable way to differentiate between those that are Tesseras and those that are not. Because of the abundance of collateral impacts Tessera has that alter (virtually always improving) the color and pattern in non-Tessera siblings, it makes sense that some extraordinary-looking non-Tesseras are surely out there, and that they are falsely identified as Striped Tesseras?

Thank you, Catherine Turley and Richard Hume for your observations of all three phenotypes from your Tessera projects this year. Thanks, Catherine, for the following synopsis. It should be noted that this article is based on current understanding of Tessera data. It is intended to offer observations of the Tessera types we've collectively produced to date. Of course, there are exceptions to everything, so we are by no means offering this as definitive descriptions of these phenotypes. Any Tessera evidence to support or refute our findings will be appreciated.

Striped Tessera: virtually no lateral tessellation; dorsal stripes resemble non-Tessera Striped mutants, but perhaps slightly thicker?
Striped Motley Tessera: virtually no lateral tessellation; dorsal stripes resemble non-Tessera Striped Motley mutants, but perhaps with more black retained?
Motley Tessera: ?? The jury is still out on this one. Perhaps Motley Tesseras look like normal Tesseras?? (let's hope not)
Super Tessera (aka: Tessera homozygote): As far as we know at this time, only one exists (owned by Vin Russo https://www.cuttingedgeherp.com/) so it's phenotype may/may not represent this genetic form.