Sunkissed (no aka)
Most Commonly Used Name: Sunkissed
Mode of Genetic Inheritance: Recessive
Morph Type: Single Recessive Mutation
Eye Color: Black pupil & *body ground colored* iris

FIRST, What is the Star-gazing (aka: SG or Star-gazer) mutation? Unbeknownst to the discoverer of the Sunkissed mutation was that another gene mutation lurked in the genome of those first Sunkissed mutants. It is now called Star-gazer because snakes that have the gene (it is NOT a disease so the only way a snake can get it is to inherit it from a parent) have inhibited motor skills that cause them so lie upside-down or move in a corkscrew fashion. They eat and breed normally, but will always have this gene mutation for the rest of their lives. we NEVER sell babies from a Star-gazing gene carrier (we either euthanize the snake or use it for test breeding to determine if any of our breeders are gene carriers). We have tested a few of our Sunkissed corns but not all of them. We have NEVER told anyone that our snakes are devoid of this gene and we never will. If we sell babies from snakes that genetically tested negative for SG.

Anyone who breeds Sunkissed corns potentially has a het SG snake in their breeding inventory, unless they they conducted breeding trials to determine if all their snakes have it.

Wow, what a beautiful corn snake. Sometimes referred to as Hypo B (the second hypomelanistic mutation to be discovered), this one's the prettiest ever. Allegedly, the gene derives from wild-caught Okeetee corns that were caught on or near Okeetee Hunt Club. The odd head pattern on most Sunkissed corns is very unusual for any corn snake mutation, but the older the corn snake hobby gets, the more we see such unusual things. In some, the melanin in their pattern is sometimes "shattered", giving the visual appearance of having dotted blotch outlines. Some even have no discernible corn snake pattern. Just semi-orderly dotted pattern that sometimes doesn't even remind one of pattern saddles. Since virtually every Sunkissed corn I've ever owned was less than friendly toward humans (polite way of saying, "*watch out when ya reach for one*"), it is safe to say that their human intolerance is a behavior associated with the mutation.

Enough of the odd characteristics of these beautiful mutants. If there is one negative stigma attached to this mutation, it's surely the potential that the one you get may have a genetic defect sometimes called "star-gazer's disorder". The is called a lethal mutation since effects of the muation are not advantageous to the homozygote. Star-gazer's causes the snake to have limited or aberrant control over balance. Similar neural disorders have been demonstrated in many animal species, and sometimes the cuase is viral. Also, the *neural* symptoms of this mutation parallel that of animals with certain parasites that retard balance control. Star-gazer's in corn snakes it not a contagious disease or pathogen, so the only way your snake's will get it is through genetics. It is inherited recessively, so some people that swear it is not lurking in the genes of their snakes, cannot really be certain of that – without controlled breeding trials. Only by breeding a suspect corn to a star-gazer homozygote or heterozygote can one determine the presence of the gene. Ideally, if you have any corns that MAY have this genetic mutation, you should breed it to a known homozygote. Even that is not proof positive, given that you must have at least 20 progeny (of which 100% are not afflicted with the disorder) in order to be reasonably assured that it's not in your snake's genome. This mutation was discovered in Sunkissed mutants, but it is not linked to the Sunkissed mutation. It has been reported in several other non-Sunkissed corns (mutant or not). Hence, if you discover you have a star-gazer mutant, it is recommended that you restrict it's genes to creating "control" snakes that can be used by others to determine the presence or absence of the lethal gene in their snakes. Even though it is not transmitted like a viral pathogen, the danger of the gene inflicting many other breeding lines of snakes is likely and potentially disastrous, in the absence of breeding trials. Such trials are under way here at SMR (and with many breeders) and if/when we determine that any of our snakes are carriers of this lethal gene, they will be euthanized. BTW, if you think you're safe because you have been breeding sunkissed corns (or any other corn snake type) for over four generations without seeing any homozygotes of the disorder, think again. If your first Sunkissed corn (or Okeetee or other type) was het for this mutation, it could take many generations for you to make the discovery. Since each snake hands one copy of its' genotype to each of its' progeny, potentially half of each generation could be heterozygotes. If you (or your customers) continually bred those heterozygotes to non genetic cariers of the mutation, only part of their progeny would inherit one copy of the mutation. If you were lucky in not seeing any sign of the gene in over four generations (or potentially unlucky, in this case), it does not follow that none of your snakes are carrying a copy of the gene. Until you pair two of them with a copy of the gene, it will continue to hide in the family tree.
Several years ago, I bought three female Okeetees from a breeder that is now out of the corn snake trade/hobby. They were sold as being het for Sunkissed. I bred one of the females to one of my best Extreme Okeetees and sold the babies as Okeetees. Two years later, a customer called me to ask why some of the Okeetee babies she produced from the pair of Okeetees she got from me were doing the loopy, corkscrew locomotive thing. Because I had never produced a star-gazer homozygote, I naively ruled that out, but upon reviewing acquisition records, I identified that the parents of her mutants were the Okeetees het for Sunkissed.
I immediately tracked down the other two customers that had purchased some of those, advising them that those snakes could be carriers of the lethal gene. I then euthanized the three adult female Okeetees I purchased from the other breeder. This lethal gene could be in hundreds or thousands of corns right now, and they don't have to be Sunkissed corns. Hence, if you ever discover that you have the gene, advise all

customers that purchased its' progeny, and if you're not going to use the carriers for producing TEST snakes for others, I recommend that you humanely euthanize them. By essentially eliminating them from the gene pool, you have take an important step toward eliminating this horrible gene.

Mixing the Sunkissed mutation with other color mutations and with pattern mutants is never disappointing. Except for the grouchy demeanor, I don't recall seeing a single mutation compound I didn't like. I know you'll have fun mixing and matching them with other corn snake mutations and morphs.

What to expect:
As neonates, they are fairly colorful and most of them keep and intensify that orange coloration. Many of the adults I've owned and received are nearly as orange as a Florida Orange (the citric fruit). Some of mine actually have yellow inside some of their markings, separated from the ground color zones by deep black markings. Most of the blotch marginal pattern only covers half of one scale each, rendering the vision of faint or pixelated pattern outlines outlines. The head pattern on most is difficult to explain, so we'll just say it's "un-cornly" – but tasteful. Some may be almost entirely Okeetee looking (partly because the mutation was discovered in Okeetees and partly because we're infusing the gene into so many other genes, Okeetees are surely in the mix). Some truly befit the mis-spelled namesake; a popular Orange Juice Type beverage. Okay, now the bad news. Most breeders hesitate to mention the scratch on the side of the new car you're buying, but the only thing most Sunkissed mutants have in common (other than their beauty and genetic potential when bred to other mutants) is low regard for human beings. We have a couple here that are predictable and "human friendly", but more than 85% of all Sunkissed mutants rarely tolerate handling by humans. I see that trait somewhat diluted when we outcross them to other mutants, but it would be wrong not to warn you that most Sunkissed corns are not the pets you'd freely hand to the kids.

SURPLUS section of this web site). We do not provide pictures of individual hatchling snakes for sale, nor do we recommend that you ever choose a new pet based on an image of its neonatal form. Corns change so dramatically from hatchling to adult, they will NEVER have the same colors or contrasts throughout maturity.While most of the snakes we produce will mature to resemble the featured adult image(s) on our web site, unlike manufactured products that are respectively clones of each other, the nature of polygenic variation results in each animal being similar but not identical to others of its morph. The snake we select for you may not mature to be identical to the pictured examples, but will be chosen based on our experience of observing which neonates will mature to properly represent their respective morph. We take this responsibility very seriously, and therefore publish the guarantee that we will exchange your SMR snake if it does not mature to be like our advertised examples.