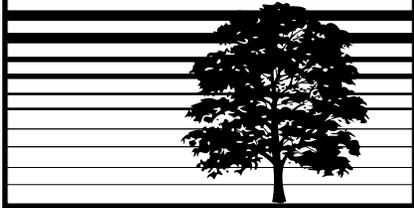


Savannah River Ecology Laboratory



REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN MYTHS

- **Myth:** *A coachwhip snake will whip a person to death with its tail and then stick the tip of its tail up their nose to see if they are still breathing.*
Truth: Coachwhips have a long tail that resembles a braided whip.
- **Myth:** *A milksnake will milk a cow.*
Truth: Milk snakes often enter barns in search of mice and rats. They do not have the necessary mouth structure to milk a cow, nor could they digest milk.
- **Myth:** *A hoop snake will place the end of its tail in its mouth and roll after a person.*
Truth: Mud snakes have the habit of lying in a loose coil while basking.
- **Myth:** *A snake can hypnotize birds and other prey.*
Truth: Snakes have no eyelids, and they never blink. Some species may also move their head from side to side to gain depth perception while hunting.
- **Myth:** *The bite from a kingsnake won't kill you, but it will make you sick.*
Truth: Non-venomous species have no venom, and other than rare secondary infection they will not make a person ill.
- **Myth:** *A rattlesnake gets a new button on its rattle every year.*
Truth: Every time a rattlesnake sheds its skin, a new button is formed on its rattle. Snakes usually shed several times a year.
- **Myth:** *A constrictor snake crushes its prey.*
Truth: Constrictors kill by suffocation. They do not break bones or smash organs.
- **Myth:** *When a snapping turtle bites it will not let go until it thunders.*
Truth: Snapping turtles have powerful jaws and often hold on tenaciously. Thunder has nothing to do with when they will let go.
- **Myth:** *A toad can give you warts.*
Truth: Toad skin has a warty appearance, but human warts are caused by a virus.
- **Myth:** *Sprinkling sulfur in your yard will keep snakes from coming near the house.*
Truth: There is no evidence to suggest that sulfur will deter snakes.

