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WHO?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHEN?

WHY?

HOW?

Ssssnake sssseason!

Rustenburg – Summer in Rustenburg reaches very high temperatures, and so... rodents, frogs and birds will seek water and snakes will follow as these are their prey. In the summer months snakes will most often be found in houses or garden water features, dams and swimming pools. Snakes play an extremely important role in the environment by controlling rodent populations. It is never advised to kill a snake, although most of us are petrified of these slithering creatures. Yet many have a deep love and understanding of snakes and go out of their way to protect and conserve snake populations. *Platinum Weekly* newspaper spoke to a local young snake enthusiast, Déan Jonker, who told us about his hobby. "I was raised on a farm in the Donkerhoek area. Farm life instilled in me a great love and respect for all animals and nature. I caught my first snake at the age of 11, a red-lipped herald snake (*Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia*), which is mildly venomous and common in Southern Africa. After this first experience, I was fascinated by snakes and make it a priority to inform

people of the dangers of trying to catch a snake," says Jonker. "People should rather call an experienced person to remove snakes. Accidents do happen."

Tips to keep your garden - snake free:

- Do not keep building rubble, bricks, asbestos or sheets of corrugated iron in your garden.
- Neither compost heaps, rockeries, fish ponds and aviaries as they provide a source of food and hiding spots for snakes.
- Avoid thick hedges, shrubs and creepers against walls and windows.
- Snakes prey on rodents, lizards, birds and frogs. An abundance of these may lure snakes.

What to do if you come across a snake:

If you spot a snake in your garden, keep a safe distance, at least three meters. Try not to lose sight of the snake and call a snake capturer. If you are not aware of any such person, call the SPCA, fire department or the police. **Snake emergency numbers: Phillip Snyman at 079 527 4293 or 078 108 4543.**



A red-tailed boa constrictor, an exotic snake from North and Central South America, with Pieter du Plooy of Piet's Crazy Pets in Rustenburg. For more information on Piet's Crazy Pets, contact 082-374 9536 or visit www.pietscrazypets.co.za.



Snake enthusiast, Déan Jonker.



Batista, a six-year old green iguana, also to be seen at Piet's Crazy Pets.

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