

# Golden Tree Snake – Mildly Venomous – Not Very Dangerous



Golden Tree Snake – Venomous – Little Danger to Humans

These Golden Tree Snakes are also known as Flying Snakes. They glide very well, perhaps the best of any snake in the world, and even better than some squirrels and lizards. Golden Tree Snakes are a lime green (เขียวเขียว) and black checkered type patterned snake. They are tree dwellers but can climb anything, even walls. They appear to have a favorite food – the Tokay Geckos that reach sizes of 12 inches long in adulthood. They are frequently seen eating Tokays.

## *Chrysopelea ornata ornatissima* (Golden Tree Snake)

**Thai language:** Ngoo kee-ow ly dok mak

**Appearance:** *Chrysopelea ornata* in Thailand is lime green with some black and green cross hatches. This snake's head is rather flat with a thin neck and atypical blunt nose, large eyes which sometimes are red depending on the angle. Generally seen as a green snake (เขียวเขียว) while moving.

**Length:** Up to 140 cm (almost 5 feet). They only get about as thick as 2-3 fingers held together.

**Range:** All over Thailand and many countries in Southeast Asia.

**Habitat:** Golden Tree Snakes can be found just about anywhere – in an apartment in Bangkok, or climbing bushes at 500 meters vertical elevation. Typically I see them at sea-level crossing the roads, or laying flat out along the stem of a low-lying

palm tree branch.

**Notes:** If you're trying to catch one of these snakes it can be very difficult. They are excellent escape artists and once they get into a clump of bushes or up a tree – forget it. Go look for something else, you won't catch it. They can disappear in trees so fast it's hard to believe. Occasionally you can find these in caves – they eat bats too.

**Active Time?** Diurnal – daytime.

**Food:** Small geckos, lizards, large Tokay geckos, rodents, bird eggs, insects, another snake occasionally, and bats. Golden Tree Snakes kill by squeezing the neck of their prey, crushing it.

**Natural Enemies:** King cobras and Kraits will eat these snakes when they can catch them. When they are small, birds eat them.

**Defensive Behavior:** Golden Tree Snakes (flying snakes) bite quickly when played with. As adults they may not lose that temperament. As babies – I have one now for some photos and video, they lose it quickly – and are OK with being held. They are very fast snakes when escaping.

**Venom Toxicity:** Rear fanged mildly venomous snake – but the venom is not known to be dangerous to humans. Just the same, don't let it bite down on you more than a second or two before you remove it. Don't give this snake a chance to inject a lot of venom and you'll likely be just fine if no allergies to it. There have been no confirmed cases of medically significant envenomation with Golden Tree Snakes.

**Offspring:** Little is known about the breeding habits of these snakes because nobody can seem to get them to mate while captive. Being oviparous it lays 6-12 eggs in May-June and they hatch in June. Baby snakes are 11-15cm long (4-6")

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Reptilia  
Order: Squamata  
Suborder: Serpentes  
Family: Colubridae  
Subfamily: Colubrinae  
Genus: *Chrysopelea*  
Species: *C. ornata*  
Binomial name: *Chrysopelea ornata*

Discovered, classified by Shaw, 1802

### Golden Tree Snake Photo:



In Thailand the golden tree snakes typically have this coloration and pattern.

### Video: My Baby Golden Tree Snake in Thailand:

#greensnake

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**Paradise Tree Snake  
(Chrysopelea paradisi) –  
Mildly Venomous – Not**

# Dangerous



This one tried to bite many times and calmed after 10 minutes.

[Last Updated: 29 April 2017]

These are great snakes for a couple of reasons. Number 1 – their colors. This snake looks like Christmas – right? Amazing oranges, greens, and blacks make it very unique.

Number 2? They fly. Well, they glide very far when they jump from a high vantage point. They can glide dozens of meters – and probably more. These snakes are limited only by how high they are when they jump. Typically they use their gliding ability to travel from tree to tree in search of prey, or to elude capture by a predator.

**Name:** *Chrysopelea paradisi*.  
**Paradise Tree Snake. Also called  
“Paradise flying snake.”**

**Length:** As long as 1.2 meters (almost 4 feet)

**Appearance:** Very similar in all aspects to *C. ornata* with the exception of scale coloration. *C. paradisi* has black scales on the neck and body which have a green or yellow dot in the center of each scale. Scales on the dorsal near the vertebral column may have an orange or reddish coloration. Some call this the flower pattern. Great variation occurs as to how much orange is evident on the dorsal area – some have on the head, and completely down the body to the tail. Others have some orange on the head and a little bit on the neck, and none of the rest of the body.

**Range:** Thailand-wide. This one was found in Krabi province at

sea-level in a handbag shop at the beach. We've found them in rainforest near a Thailand resort as well.

**Habitat:** Bushes, ground, trees, roofs. They are often found in palm tree fronds. I have found them there as well as small trees with big leaves and a lot of open area so they can see – presumably. I have found them as high as 500 meters vertically up a mountain in Thailand, and at sea level. Recently we found one 7 meters up a large tree on a hot sunny day.

**Active Time?** Diurnal – active during the day in trees and bushes, and occasionally on the ground.

**Food:** House geckos, Tokay geckos, lizards, bats, and frogs.

**Defensive Behavior:** They bite very quickly, but have small mouths and teeth. There has been no medically significant case of envenomation mentioned in the literature. They are considered harmless for humans and probably pets over the size of a cat.

**Venom Toxicity:** Weak for humans. Effective for geckos, frogs and bats. These are rear-fanged colubrids and a prolonged bite could cause swelling and pain at the bite site.

**Offspring:** They produce eggs which hatch during May/June in Thailand.

**Notes:** *C. Paradisi* is distinguished from *C. ornata* by the orange/red coloration at the top of the body, sometimes at the head, sometimes more of the body is colored, and sometimes the entire head and body are covered in the red flower like scale patterns.



Paradise Tree Snake – Not Dangerous – Just Beautiful



This paradise tree snake was caught grabbing gecko

lunch in Singapore by David Joseph. Copyright 2011 – David Joseph. Used with permission.



Paradise tree snake eating a gecko. Copyright 2017 Sabri Abdullah and used with permission.



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Subfamily: Colubrinae  
Genus: Chrysopelea  
Species: *C. paradisi*  
Binomial name – *Chrysopelea paradisi*  
Classified by Boie, in the year 1827

Video of *C. paradisi* found 5/23/13: