Genetic traits

In the reptile market, the difference between a $100 snake and a $15,00.00 snake often has to do with genetic traits. Genetic traits could be unusual patterns or colors (or both) that are able passed on through their offspring. They can be either simple recessive or co-dominant. The potential outcome from simple recessive traits can be solved by a formula that many of us learned in 8th grade science, the Punnet Square. This method shows the percentage chance of getting a desired trait to show in a reptile. With simple recessive traits, one is able to produce heteryzygous speciments. This means that even though they may appear normal, they carry the genetics for that simple recessive trait. So, if I were to breed an albino ball python with a normal ball python together, all of the babies would look normal, though they carry the genetics for albanism. This is what we call "Heterozygous for Albino". If two Heterozygous for Albino specimens are bred together, statistically you could expect 25% Albino babies, 50% Heterozygous for Albino (Het. for Albino), and 25% normal babies. Of course, you would not be able to tell the difference between the Het. babies and the normal babies. They are often sold as 66% possible Het. for albino. confusing? It gets worse! Once you get into double and triple Heterozygous then it gets confusing! However, if nothing else this article will give you the basic knowledge that is necessary to understand the lingo of us reptile geeks.

The easier trait to talk about is the co-dominant trait. This is a specific color or pattern trait (usually pattern trait in co-dominant species) which carried the dominant trait like the normal specimens. Let us take the Spider Ball Python trait for example. The Spider Ball Python is a genetic pattern trait that is co-dominant. If I were to breed a fully Spider Ball with a normal Ball Python, I would get both Spider and normal ball pythons in the first breeding! This is very cool for those who do not want to wait another generation to get the desired results! That's right, there's no such thing as a Het. for Spider ball python, so if somebody tries to sell you a Het. for Spyder ball python, just walk away!