

Diamond Valley Leader

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SLIMY CATCHES

Professional snake catcher Mark Pelley is a man in high demand due to an increase in snake activity in Diamond Valley recently. REPORT PAGE 13

Stay safe as snakes come out

Pair is lucky to survive deadly attack

Jodie Guest

AN INCIDENT in which a man and his 11-year-old autistic son were bitten by a tiger snake is a reminder of snakes' heightened activity at this time of year, says a Diamond Creek snake catcher.

Matt Horn was bitten twice as he tried to protect his son, Braeden, who had been bitten when playing with the snake in the hallway of their Diamond Creek home last month.

Mark "Snake Hunter" Pelley said the incident highlighted how simple it was for a snake to get into a house.

Mr Pelley said snakes were able to enter houses through pet doors, under doors, and through cracks or holes, air vents, windows and roofs.

"Sometimes people carry

them inside without realising" he said.

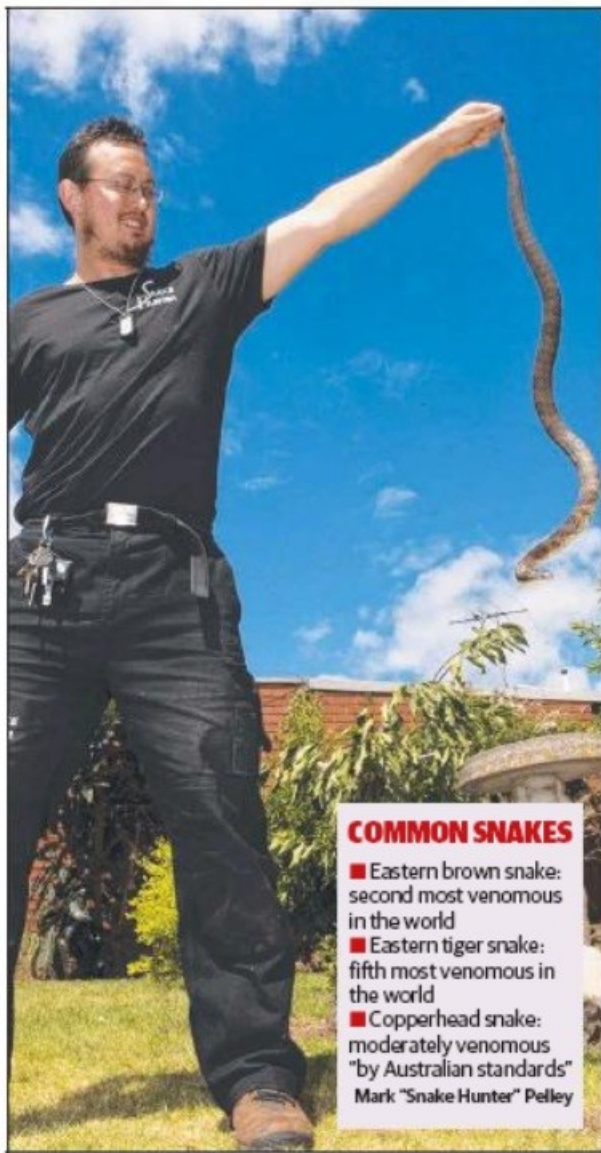
"They're usually in boots because they're looking for somewhere to hide or to regulate their temperature.

"We'll never know how the snake got into the house, but I called them a couple of weeks ago, and Braeden and Matt are both fine."

Mr Pelley, who keeps more than 80 snakes in his Diamond Creek home, said while tiger snakes were not overly aggressive, their venom was potent.

He said if people came across a snake, it was important not to touch it, to move children and animals away, call a snake catcher, and, if safe to do so, keep an eye on it so the catcher could find it.

People bitten by a snake should call 000 immediately.



COMMON SNAKES

- Eastern brown snake: second most venomous in the world
 - Eastern tiger snake: fifth most venomous in the world
 - Copperhead snake: moderately venomous "by Australian standards"
- Mark "Snake Hunter" Pelley

Mark "Snake Hunter" Pelley holds up a tiger snake during a busy summer catching the reptiles in Diamond Creek. Picture: RICHARD SERONG