



July 6, 2021

Contributed by Kim Eckert

REPTILES IN THE GARDEN

This year, specifically in May, my yard seemed to be the destination for numerous common water snakes. Ten to be exact. I was nearing the end of my catch and release mindset when I came upon a reptile in one of my front porch planters. While removing older soil, I came upon what looked like my eleventh snake. It was at least 1" in diameter and I could see 5-6 inches of the center of its body. Upon removing it, I found it wasn't a snake, but the biggest lizard I had ever seen. It was a 12"-13" Broadheaded Skink. It is indeed the largest lizard in Maryland.



They are found on the Coastal Plain of the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland. Adult Broadheaded Skinks are gray or brown, and mature males develop enlarged orange heads with powerful jaws. Broadheaded skinks eat mainly insects, spiders and other invertebrates, but will also eat mollusks, rodents and small reptiles. They are considered beneficial so, if you see one, let it be.