Poison Arrow Frog (Epipedrobates tricolor) Species Profile: Housing, Diet, and Life Span

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Poison Arrow Frog

Epipedrobates tricolor

Quick Stats: Poison Arrow Frog
Family: Dendrobatidae **Origin:** Central and South American rain forests **Size:** 1/2 to 2-1/2 inches **Diet:** Small insects such as termites, pinhead crickets, and wingless fruit flies. Vitamin supplement **Water:** Mist with a spray bottle 2-3 times a day; provide a shallow water bottle with an air stone in it to maintain high humidity **Housing:** 2 or 3 in a 10-gallon aquarium **Substrate:** Top soil, peat, and moss mixture **Decoration:** Live plants that are low light, high humidity-tolerant; multiple hiding places **Lighting:** Only full spectrum fluorescent **Temperatures:** 70 to 80ºF. Do not overheat or overdry **Humidity:** High **Care level:** Not good for beginners **Cautions:** Might bite or relieve itself if startled

Poison Arrow, Poison Dart, Poison Frog, Phantasmal Poison Frog, and Dendrobatid Frog are all terms used to describe a small, Central and South American frog known for the brightness of its coloring. When young, they start out with a dark background color. As they mature, they develop additional markings which come in a rainbow of colors. The color patterns are locality specific. The bright colors warn predators that the frogs are poisonous.

Comparable to the Mantella species, the life span of a captive Poison Arrow Frog is approximately 6 to 10 years with proper care. It is not a good idea to try to keep wild-caught Poison Arrow Frogs though; usually it means certain death for the animals. Pay a little extra for captive-born and captive-raised frogs. You and the frogs will do much better.

Pairs or trios of Poison Arrow Frogs will do extremely well in a 10-gallon aquarium decorated with hiding places and plants. For substrate, use a good mixture of top soil, peat, and moss. This will help keep the humidity high. The foliage needs to consist of low-light, high-humidity tolerant plants. Mist the terrarium with a spray bottle 2 or 3 times per day, and be sure to provide a shallow bowl of water containing an air stone. This will help maintain high humidity throughout the day.

A full spectrum fluorescent bulb should be the only form of light that you provide for Poison Arrow Frogs. Not only is this

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good for the frogs, but for the live plants as well. Like most other amphibians, Poison Arrow Frogs prefer temperatures between 70-80°F. Take care not to overheat and/or provide too low a humidity for the frogs.

Wild-caught frogs are sometimes reluctant to eat, but captive-raised frogs will take small insects such as termites, pinhead crickets, and wingless fruit flies. Fortifying the animal's diet with vitamins is always beneficial.

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