

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

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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 80°F. 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

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.