



Australian Tree Frogs

CARE SHEET

Introduction

Australian Tree Frogs belong to the genus *Litoria*, and most are arboreal (tree-living) species. These frogs are nocturnal and often spend the day sleeping, which allows them to avoid the hottest and driest times of day.

They are a long-lived amphibious group, with some adult frogs able to reach 20 years of age and up to 14 cm in length. Each adult female has the potential to produce an amazing 200-2000 eggs at any one sitting.



Diet

An essential part of keeping Australian tree frogs is understanding their dietary requirements. Both adults and juveniles are insectivores and eat a range of live insects in the wild. Appropriate insects include crickets, cockroaches, earthworms, silkworms, slugs, moths, mealworms and wax worms. Care must be taken with mealworms and wax worm portions however, as these insects are very high in fat and overfeeding can lead to significant health problems.

All insects should be treated with calcium via gut-loading and/or dusting prior to being fed. This is to prevent against nutritional diseases such as metabolic bone disease which results from chronically low calcium diets. This condition is very common amongst captive frogs.

Feeding of rodents and mince meats should generally be avoided in tree frogs, as these animals cope poorly with high protein diets and can develop kidney disease.

In terms of how much to feed, adults should be fed 10-20% of their body weight each week, in 2-3 separate feedings (i.e. offer insects every 2-3 days). Juvenile frogs should be fed more frequently (every day), but with smaller amounts.

Water access should be provided at all times, but simply using tap water may cause your frog to become sick. Tap water often contains chlorine and heavy metal additives that can be dangerous to frogs, and the level of these chemicals can be decreased (or removed) with water conditioners (available at good pet stores) or by placing the water in a shallow dish in direct sunlight for a day.

Husbandry

As arboreal animals, tree frogs require different levels in their enclosure, which can be achieved with fake plants, bamboo, tree branches or PVC pipes.

The walls of the enclosure are best made from glass or Perspex, and where possible it is good to have the roof of the enclosure made from a safe breathable mesh (materials that rust or can injure the frogs should be avoided) as this allows ventilation.





UV lights come in a large variety of sizes and shapes, but are essential for captive frogs. Appropriate UV lighting allows frogs to metabolise calcium, and without a good source of UV frogs can develop metabolic bone disease. A frog should be able to bask within 20cms of the UV light for it to be effective, and the UV globe changed every 6 months to ensure your frog is receiving enough light (over time the UV output of the globe decreases).

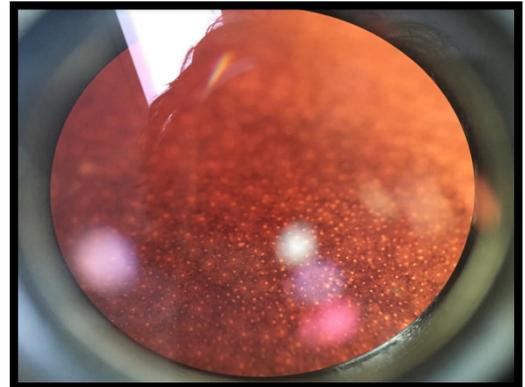
In terms of what temperature is best for your frog, the water temperature should generally be kept between 24-26°C for most species. The thermal gradient temperature in the cage should generally be between 18°C (at the cooler end) to around 32°C at the hottest end. By having a temperature gradient the frog can then self-regulate its own temperature. Any heat sources – whether you use a heat matt or heat lamp – should be placed on a thermostat to prevent dangerous fluctuations in the temperature from occurring. Water temperature can be maintained with an external water heater and filter system.

Another important aspect of your frog's environment is the humidity. Humidity can be increased by using air pumps or bubblers for smaller cages, but often sprinklers, waterfalls and living plants are required and recommended for larger enclosures. The humidity for most species should be kept between 50-70%. If there are no living plants or filtration system being used, the water in the cage should be changed weekly. This can be extended to fortnightly if appropriate filtration is present. Small percentage (ie 20%), regular water changes are better than large percentage, infrequent changes.

As for the substrate (what type of flooring to use), there are a range of products available. In general, avoid those substrates that are abrasive and/or ingestible. Some good substrates include sphagnum moss, foam rubber, large rocks or moist paper towels (for smaller enclosures).

Common diseases

1. Fungal and bacterial infections
2. Internal parasites
3. Malnutrition / Metabolic bone disease
4. Obesity
5. Trauma



A Closer Look: Examining a frog's skin under the microscope

We recommend health check ups for frogs every 6-12 months. If you have any further questions at all please don't hesitate to contact us.

