

Terrestrial Frogs & Toads

An Introductory Information Leaflet

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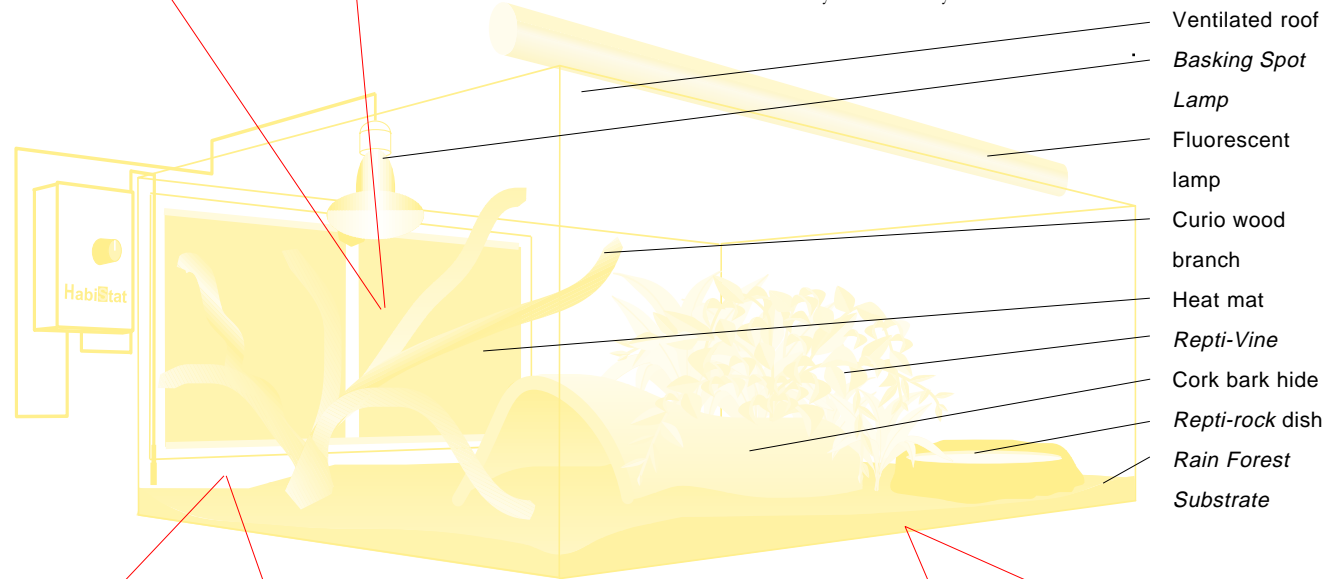
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Optional Hot Spot A local area of higher temperature may be created, if needed, with a *Basking Spot Lamp*. The *Spot Lamp* should be used in conjunction with a *HabiStat Dimming* thermostat for precise control. Hot spots should be maintained for the same day length as

Cleanliness and Hygiene: The cage will need cleaning out fairly regularly. A routine cleaner for all nonporous surfaces would be *Vetaclean*, followed by a very thorough rinse. All other materials should be replaced when soiled. As far as human hygiene is concerned, *Vetasept Surgical Scrub* will clean hands and surfaces while *Vetasept Hand Rub* will allow adequate cleansing and disinfection even in cases when water is unavailable. No cleaner or disinfectant, however dilute, must come into contact with the frog. The exception is *Vetadine* which can be used to give any

Lighting Some of these species may appreciate sunlight while others will avoid it. The cage could have a small fluorescent light, preferably a full spectrum type like a *Reptile D₃* lamp. They may also like a *Basking Spot Lamp* to warm themselves. Natural daylight may not be enough but the cage must not be exposed to direct sunlight in

Cage Decor: Use *Rain Forest Substrate* as it will stand up to the periodic spraying with water frogs need. A large *Repti-rock* water dish could be used to provide a bath. Cork bark and Curio wood could be used to make an interesting three dimensional display. While draping *Repti-Vines* in the cage will provide refuges under which the frogs can hide. *Repti-rock* caves would lend even more functionality and security.



Background Heat Use a *HabiStat* heat mat between half and two thirds the size of the cage to provide background heating. The hottest spot in the cage should not be above 30°C while the coolest should not be below 15°C. Use a *HabiStat Mat-Stat* if the temperature is too hot but put the whole cage

A cage suitable for terrestrial frogs and toads

Food: Crickets, Locusts, Mealworms and Earthworms of an appropriate size should make up 95% of the diet. Supplement livefoods by feeding *Cricket Diet Plus* or *Mealworm Diet Plus*. Once the animal is tame dead food may be taken by moving the food in front of the frog. Defrosted rodents and 'snake steak' sausages are eaten like this but only feed them occasionally as they cause severe problems if fed to excess. Water should be fresh and changed every couple of

Cage Set Up The cage should be set up to allow an active frog plenty of scope to climb, burrow, warm in a hot spot, move to a cooler place and hunt for food. The frogs should also be able to secrete themselves into refuges

Shopping List

Not every thing is needed to begin with, usually one item from each of the categories marked •. As a basic starting point the following essentials are considered the minimum needed:

Plastic Cage
Heat Mat
Rain Forest Substrate
Repti-rock dish
Thermometer
Repti-Vine
Piece of Cork Bark

or all these items are available in a Starter Kit

After a while as your collection and experience grows

other alternatives and extras can be used.

- **HabiStat, Heat Mats** (6x11/7w, 11x11/12w, 17x11/20w, 23x11/28w, 29x11/35w, 35x11/42w & 49x11/55w) & **Strips** (17x6/10w, 23x6/15w, 35x6/22w & 47x6/30w)
- **Thermometers** (Alcohol, dial, minimum - maximum & electronic digital)
- **Hygrometers** (Dial & electronic digital)
- **HabiStat Thermostats** (Mat-Stat/100w, Temperature/300w, Twin/2x300, Pulse Proportional/600w, Dimming/600w & Night Time Drop Function)
- **HabiStat Light Switches** (Sun, Moon, and Sun &

- Moon Switches and Night Eyes.)
- **Repti-rock Dishes, Hides & Caves**
- **Repti-Vine**
- **Rain Forest Substrate**
- **Cork Bark**
- **Curio Wood**
- **Lights** e.g. Reptile D₃ or Natural Sunlight
- **Arcadia Control Units** (15w, 2x15w, 18w, 2x18w, 20w & 2x20w)
- **Basking Spot Lamp**
- **Crickets**
- **Locusts**
- **Mealworms**
- **Mealworm Diet Plus**
- **Cricket Diet Plus**
- **Vetaclean**
- **Vetasept Surgical Scrub**
- **Vetasept Hand Rub**
- **Books & Leaflets**

Terrestrial Frogs & Toads...

Frogs and Toads are amphibians and there are many species that are commonly kept as pets. These may include:

True Frogs *Rana spp.*
True Toads *Bufo spp.*
Spadefoot Toads *Pelobates spp.*, *Scaphiopus spp.* & *Megophrys spp.*
African Fire Toads *Phrynomerus spp.*
Running Frogs *Kassina spp.*

...Housing

The permanent cage needs to be fairly large, 35cm x 15cm x 25cm being a suitable size for two animals with a body length of 5cm each. Juveniles can be grown on in proportionately smaller cages but in all cases the requirements of the individual housed should be taken into account. Many types of cage can be used to house frogs. For juveniles, the moulded clear plastic tanks with fitted lids are very useful. For bigger animals a purpose made vivarium is probably most appropriate. The types with sliding glass doors to the front are very popular. Another often used cage is a converted aquarium. A special adapting lid is used to contain the amphibians and house any equipment that may be used.

Whatever the type of cage used, it must be kept scrupulously clean. The cage should be set up in a manner similar to the diagram overleaf. A heater should be installed to provide a background temperature of between 20°C and 27°C. This is best done with a *HabiStat* heat mat or strip taped to the inside of the back wall of a wooden cage but on either side if it is made of glass or plastic. Make sure the mat acts like a radiator, so very little of it should be below the line of the substrate. A local hot spot of 30°C may be added as an optional extra. In which case, a *HabiStat* controlled *Basking Spotlamp* would provide the necessary heat. The hot spot should warm an area in front of the heat mat. The coolest part of the cage should be nearer 20°C. All heat sources should be comparatively low powered to protect the animals from being burnt. The hot spot, if present, should only operate during the day for about fourteen hours in summer dropping to twelve in winter.

Much of the success achieved in keeping frogs will come from the skilful manipulation of ventilation. Some of these animals require very high humidity, while others like it a little dryer but none can stand stagnant air conditions. Fresh air moving into the cage is essential. Use the upward draughts caused by heated air rising to flush out the cage and drag fresh air in. A light daily misting with a hand sprayer will provide most of the humidity required. Some species will require the substrate to be damp but not wringing wet. Look in the literature for details of the particular species being kept.

...Husbandry

Most species are best kept in groups of the same species. Some may even be kept in community set ups containing different species. Be careful when mixing frogs as some of these bigger species are cannibalistic and will tackle another frog almost as big as itself. Most frogs will swallow another individual if it moves within striking distance and is of a size that is similar to prey animals.

These animals do not really like being handled, so if it is necessary to move them, scoop them into a container like a bowl and move

them in this. Be prepared, however, for the animal to attempt an escape by jumping. Use a hand as a lid to restrain the frog in case of mishap.

In time the cage will begin to look scruffy and as soon as any faeces or debris appears it should be removed. As everything recommended for the cage is washable or disposable, a good clean out is easily done. The cage set up advised in this leaflet is practicable and can be made to look pleasing to the eye. It can be made to look quite natural even without using live plants which are best left until some experience is gained. In any case, some of the very informative books on amphibians in general and frogs in particular could be investigated.

...Food & Feeding

Insects like crickets and locusts form the staple diet in captivity for most specimens. Mealworms can also be fed. Crickets should be fed *Cricket Diet Plus* while Mealworms and *Locusts* should be offered *Mealworm Diet Plus* respectively to 'load' the insect with vitamins and minerals. Alternatively, the insects can be dusted with a supplement like *Repton*.

Waxworms can be given as an occasional treat or used to tempt fussy feeders. Some species will take earthworms but not all are able to cope with wet or sticky prey. For rearing juveniles, fruit flies or hatchling crickets can be used until the frogs have grown enough to tackle bigger prey.

Food is sensed by movement and then grabbed with the mouth or caught on a sticky tongue. If it puts up too much of a struggle or is particularly bulky, it is pushed in with the fore limbs. Frogs can take enormous meals compared to their size. Meals that are over half the size of the frog have been eaten. Despite this, it is not recommended that such gargantuan feasts be offered. Indeed, many juvenile specimens may have died prematurely due to their owners misguided attempts to indulge them. Prey sized at about the same width of the mouth is probably best.

Feed the frogs about twice every week with enough food that equals no more than one quarter of the animal's total mass. Do not to leave an excess of uneaten insects in the cage as these will only annoy the frogs.

A water dish kept full of fresh water should always be available. Frogs do not drink but soak up water through the skin. So do not put vitamin supplements into the water dish as this may cause more problems that it prevents. There is no route into the gut via the water dish.

Almost all of them like to immerse themselves occasionally, so a bath is essential. The problem is that the animals may use the bath as a loo. This will need cleaning out as soon as possible, as frogs are particularly sensitive to the combination of wetness and dirt.

...Reproduction

To sex a frog an adult specimen is usually required. The males often have vocal sacs and darker coloured throats. Many also have rough dark pads on the fingers and thumb. These are used to grip the female and ensure the male is present when the spawn is laid.

Mating and spawning may not be at all easy to induce in captivity. If breeding is contemplated, a good deal of research will be necessary and some of the many excellent books should be consulted.