

FROG FOREST DESIGNS

How to care for your new Dart Frog:

Caring for your new poison dart frogs isn't terribly complicated, and when done properly, will reward you with years and years of happy and healthy frogs. If you are lucky enough to have a mating pair, they will reward you with eggs, tadpoles and baby froglets, which they will raise on their own if you don't care to intervene.

First and foremost, the easiest way to harm or kill your frogs is too much heat and/or too little water. While not hard to maintain, these little frogs can be very sensitive to high temperatures and low humidity levels. As these frogs are found naturally in the humid rain forests of South America, they need their keepers to provide them with similar conditions while in captivity. Caring for them in a Frog Forest Designs natural vivarium is a perfect way to give them the habitat they'll need to live in and thrive. Here is a brief list of Do's and Don'ts when keeping poison dart frogs in captivity:

FOOD: Flightless Fruit Flies (*Drosophila* sp.) are the main staple in a captive dart frog's diet. Most dart frogs only eat very small insects not much larger than 1/8" overall. Smaller frogs (like thumbnail species) will eat *D. melanogaster* flies, while larger frogs (like most *Dendrobates*) will eat the larger *D. hydei* flies. It is also good to supplement other types of insects in their diet from time to time, such as small isopods, springtails, bean beetles and pinhead crickets. All food should be dusted with a vitamin supplement at each feeding.

VITAMINS: There are several vitamin supplements that are great for poison dart frogs in captivity. Adding these vitamins help balance their diets and gives them the nutrients they would normally receive in the wild. A good Calcium supplement is key, and should be used at every feeding. Repashy Calcium Plus and Rep-Cal Calcium are both great options. As well as adding Calcium to their diet, it is also a good idea to add in some Vitamin A once or twice a month to help breeding frogs produce healthy offspring. We use Repashy Vitamin A Plus once a month, rotated into our supplement schedule. While not a necessity, Astaxanthin is great for color enhancing to keep your frogs vibrant and bright!

LIGHTING: While lighting is beneficial for every living being, it is not a huge factor in dart frog care. Most dart frogs in the wild live under the forest canopies, and don't always get a lot of full sun exposure. While we're not saying to keep them in the dark, a good light source is not as important to the frogs as it will be to the living plants in your vivarium. The frogs also do not need the UVB spectrum of lighting that many reptile brand lights provide. A simple LED or florescent light works just fine for the frogs, and one rated at 6500K is best for optimal plant growth. The lights provided with our complete tank setups are perfectly designed for both the frogs and plants.

TEMPERATURE: As mentioned above, higher temperatures can be fatal to most dart frogs. Living under forest canopies in the wild provides them with plenty of shade and cooler temperatures, even though they live in relatively warm areas. Most frogs will appreciate their temperatures to stay around 75° F during the day, with a drop to around 65° F at night. These temperatures are OK to fluctuate some, but you want to avoid lows under 60° F and highs above 80° F for extended periods. The easiest way to control the temperatures inside their tanks is to keep your room thermostat set in the ideal range. Keep in mind that more than a few hours of 85° or more can be deadly.

HUMIDITY: Originally living in tropical rain forests, you can easily see that dart frogs in captivity would require a nice, humid habitat to thrive in. Ideally it is best to keep their humidity between 60-90% RH at all times. It's very easy to achieve this by simply misting their tanks once or twice a day, in order to keep those levels of humidity. Our all-glass tanks are perfect for maintaining a high humidity level.

If you follow the information and instructions listed above for maintaining your naturalistic vivarium and care for your poison dart frogs, you should have no trouble keeping both for many years. Once you get these practices nailed down and implemented routinely, the overall maintenance will be minimal, and you can enjoy your plants and animals without the major hassles that come with many other pets.

While the above information is meant as a very brief explanation of proper husbandry for your plants and frogs, it is not a comprehensive list detailing all the information that is useful in this hobby. Each Frog Forest Designs vivarium setup will include detailed written instructions on maintaining your vivarium. If you purchase a vivarium with frogs, you will also get a more detailed care sheet for the frogs.

Please feel free to contact us anytime if you have any further questions about vivarium or dart frog care, and we will be more than happy to help!



www.frogforestdesigns.com