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CAECILIANS

Atlantic Slender Caecilian

Dermophis parviceps

Dermophis parviceps is a slender, limbless, burrowing caecilian from the rainforest and montane forest of Costa Rica and Panama. Adults are 20-27 cm long. It lives deep in moist soil and is probably live-bearing like the rest of the genus. The species has hardly been studied in captivity, so the care described here is based on experience with terrestrial caecilians.

Family: Dermophiidae Former name: *Gymnopis parviceps; Siphonops parviceps*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-27 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 30 × 35 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-23 °C**
Humidity	**90-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Development	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**1-16 young**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The care described here is based on experience with terrestrial caecilians, especially *Dermophis mexicanus*, because *D. parviceps* has not been studied systematically in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	The species is kept stable and warm: 22-25 °C by day and 21-23 °C at night. The soil temperature has not been measured in the wild. Fluctuations of more than about 3 °C and rapid changes are poorly tolerated.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	The air in the box is almost saturated, 90-100 %, because the soil is moist. The moisture is maintained by misting the soil and turning over the top few centimetres now and then.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The species does not need a water bowl or a water area. The moisture comes from the soil, and condensation on the walls of the box is enough to drink from. A water bowl can make the soil too wet.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species lives underground, and a specific lighting programme is not necessary. The ordinary day-night rhythm of the room with 10-14 hours of light is enough.
FEEDING	Earthworms are the staple food and are taken by almost all terrestrial caecilians. For the small, slender *D. parviceps*, small earthworms or pieces of worm are suitable, and an adult is fed 5-10 small worms every other week.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*D. parviceps* spends almost its whole life underground and is rarely seen on the surface; a healthy animal lies buried most of the time.
NATIVE RANGE	Costa Rica and Panama.