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FROGS

Climbing Mantella

Mantella laevigata

Mantella laevigata is a small, diurnal frog from the north-eastern rainforests of Madagascar and the only one in the genus that climbs. It is black with a yellow to pale green back and blue spots on the limbs, grows to 2-3 cm and breeds in water-filled bamboo stems and tree holes, where the female feeds the tadpole with unfertilised eggs. It needs a tall, humid and warm terrarium with plenty of branches.

Family: Mantellidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**2-3 cm** snout-vent length
Weight	**1.2-2 g**
Lifespan	**4-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Skin toxins in the wild	**Mild**
Skin toxins in captivity	**None** Captive-bred animals. Wild-caught animals can keep their toxins for a long time
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 50 × 100 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**20-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**17-22 °C**
Humidity	**80-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1-2 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**In leaf axils (e.g. bromeliads)**
Eggs per clutch	**1-3**
Hatching	**2-7 days**
Larval period	**90 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants, unfertilised eggs from the female and other tadpoles**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs and feeds the tadpoles with eggs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Mantella laevigata climbs, so the terrarium must be tall and arranged vertically. The minimum size for a group of four adults is 60 × 50 × 100 cm (length × width × height). Height matters more than floor area.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the temperature should be 20-26 °C, and at night it falls 2-4 degrees to 17-22 °C. The daytime temperature may reach 27 °C, and for shorter periods the species tolerates up to 30 °C and down to 17-18 °C.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

The humidity should be 80-100 %. Mist the terrarium with dechlorinated water or rainwater every day, especially in the period when the species is to breed. The bottom should be damp, but never waterlogged.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

Place one or more shallow water bowls in the terrarium, and keep them filled at all times. The depth is 1-2 cm, so the animals can easily climb out.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The light should suit the plants, but must not heat up the terrarium. Provide a 10-12 hour day and darkness at night.

FEEDING

The staple food is small arthropods: springtails, fruit flies, newly hatched crickets, termites and small ants. Juveniles get springtails.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Males are relatively bold and call openly to defend their territory, while females are more withdrawn. Males fight over territories with wrestling, chasing and leaping.

NATIVE RANGE

Madagascar.