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POISON DART FROGS

Little Devil Poison Frog

Oophaga sylvatica

Oophaga sylvatica is one of the largest poison frogs in the genus *Oophaga*: a diurnal forest-floor frog of 3-4 cm from the rainforests of Ecuador and Colombia, known for its many colour forms in orange, red and yellow on a black or brown background and for its persistent brood care.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates sylvaticus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**3-4 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**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	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**23-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-23 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1-2 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**18-24 months**
Eggs per clutch	**4-20**
Hatching	**10-16 days**
Larval period	**75-90 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Unfertilised eggs from the female**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs, carries the tadpoles and feeds the tadpoles with eggs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
An enclosure of at least 60 × 60 × 60 cm (length, width, height) suits one pair. The males are strongly territorial, and the females also hold territories and form a hierarchy when there are many animals.

TEMPERATURE
Oophaga sylvatica comes from a lowland with almost constant warmth, so the temperature must be kept stable: 23-26 °C by day and 21-23 °C at night.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING
Humidity is kept at 70-80 % during the day and rises towards 100 % early in the morning and late in the evening, as when fog and rain drift in over the forest. At midday it may fall to about 70 %.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY
A shallow water dish with 1-2 cm of water and a ramp of stones or moss is enough for adults; the frogs are poor swimmers, and the water should reach no more than about three quarters of the animal's height when it stands.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The lighting should first and foremost suit the plants. Fluorescent tubes or LED lights of about 6,500 K give natural colours and good plant growth; choose light sources with high efficiency and a reflector.

FEEDING
Adults take the usual small feeder insects: springtails, small and large fruit flies, micro crickets, small waxworm larvae, booklice, firebrats and finely sifted meadow plankton.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
The males are strongly territorial and call from morning to evening; the call is short and high, about five notes per second. Rival males call in competition, advance and retreat and can end up in wrestling matches.

NATIVE RANGE
Ecuador and Colombia.