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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Eastern Tiger Salamander

Ambystoma tigrinum

Ambystoma tigrinum is a stout salamander from the eastern half of the USA, typically 15-20 cm long, with yellow to olive-green blotches on a brown to black background. The larvae live in water, while the adults spend most of their lives in self-dug burrows and emerge at night. Some animals never metamorphose and become sexually mature with their gills retained.

Family: Ambystomatidae

Mild skin toxins

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-33 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**12-20 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Temperate woodland and meadow**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Beginner**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**5-48 months**
Eggs per season	**100-1,000**
Hatching	**12-50 days**
Larval period	**75-150 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Other larvae and small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 25 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**18-22 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-22 °C**
Humidity	**80-95%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Adults can be kept in many kinds of container. The simplest is a large plastic box with a tight-fitting lid and many small ventilation holes; a glass terrarium with a wire-mesh lid gives a better view.

TEMPERATURE

Ambystoma tigrinum needs 18-22 °C by day, both as a larva and as an adult, and at night the temperature may fall to 16 °C. The species tolerates cold better than heat.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

The substrate must be moist, but never wet or muddy, as the animal absorbs water through its skin. Humidity is not documented for the species; 80-95 % is borrowed from *Ambystoma mavortium*.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

Adults do not need a water section: they are poor swimmers and can drown. A shallow, heavy water bowl is not necessary, but it is a good safeguard, because if the substrate becomes too dry the animal seeks out the bowl.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Ambystoma tigrinum is nocturnal and does not need any special lighting. There is no evidence that the species needs UVB, and strong UV light can damage the eyes and skin of amphibians.

FEEDING

Larvae and neotenic animals eat earthworms, compost worms, suitably sized crickets, waxworms and small fish (not goldfish).

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Adults dig and lie hidden for most of the day. They are nocturnal and hunt by ambush. Many animals learn to recognise their keeper and beg for food. Outside the breeding season the species is solitary and does fine alone.

NATIVE RANGE

United States.