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POISON DART FROGS

Dyeing Poison Frog

Dendrobates tinctorius

Dendrobates tinctorius is one of the largest poison frogs and the one that varies most in colour: black with yellow, white or blue markings that change from region to region, and some forms are almost entirely blue. It is diurnal, grows to 4-7 cm and is the most commonly kept poison frog in terrariums.

Family: Dendrobatidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**4-7 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10-20 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	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**20-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**80-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
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	**10-18 months**
Eggs per clutch	**5-10**
Hatching	**14-18 days** at 24-25 °C
Larval period	**35-84 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs and carries the tadpoles**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A pair of *Dendrobates tinctorius* needs a terrarium of at least 45 × 45 × 45 cm.
TEMPERATURE	*Dendrobates tinctorius* thrives at 20-26 °C during the day, and at night the temperature may fall to about 18 °C. Heat is the species' greatest danger: above 27 °C the frog becomes stressed, and prolonged heat can kill it.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should stay above 80 %, preferably 80-100 %. Mist at least twice a day with dechlorinated tap water, reverse osmosis water or spring water.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	*Dendrobates tinctorius* does not need a water dish or waterfall when the terrarium is built correctly and misted regularly. Standing water in open dishes quickly grows bacteria, so leave out water dishes unless you want tadpoles.
LIGHTING AND UVB	No need for UVB has been documented in *Dendrobates tinctorius*, and UVB is therefore optional. The plants need light, so use an LED plant lamp above the terrarium.
FEEDING	*Dendrobates tinctorius* eats small arthropods. Newly metamorphosed froglets take *Drosophila melanogaster* (small, flightless fruit flies) and soon become large enough for *D. hydei*.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Dendrobates tinctorius* is diurnal and bold and often sits out in the open on the floor. The male's call is a low, quiet buzz that often cannot be heard from outside the terrarium. Most forms are best kept in pairs.
NATIVE RANGE	French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana and Brazil.