herpy

POISON DART FROGS

Machalilla poison frog

Epipedobates machalilla

Epipedobates machalilla is a slender, subdued poison frog of 14-18 mm with a brown back and a pale stripe along the flank. It lives only in the lowlands and dry forests of western Ecuador. The species is hardly ever kept, and its care is based on the climate and its close relatives.

Family: Dendrobatidae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**14-18 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**8-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Dry forest and 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	**40 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 3 adults
Temperature, day	**22-27 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-22 °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 in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Eggs per clutch	**15**
Hatching	**18-22 days**
Larval period	**42-70 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	Little is known about the care of *Epipedobates machalilla*, and the species is hardly ever kept.
TEMPERATURE	Keep 22-27 °C by day, with slightly cooler and slightly warmer spots in the enclosure, and 19-22 °C at night. The species lives lower and warmer than *Epipedobates tricolor*, so the upper part of the range suits it.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be 80-100 %. Mist several times a day or use a rain system, for example three times daily for 20-60 seconds, so that leaves and furnishings are dry again after about an hour. Use rainwater or reverse-osmosis water.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	A shallow water dish with 1-2 cm of water, which the frogs can easily climb out of, is enough. Use rainwater, reverse-osmosis water or dechlorinated tap water, and change it often.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The lighting is for the plants: fluorescent tubes or LED bars for about 12 hours a day. The closely related species thrive without UVB, so it is optional.
FEEDING	*Epipedobates machalilla* is small and takes small prey: springtails and fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), and as an adult also the larger *Drosophila hydei* and newly hatched crickets.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The males are probably territorial and call from perches on the ground and in the leaf litter, like their close relatives.
NATIVE RANGE	Ecuador.