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POISON DART FROGS

Phantasmal poison frog

Epipedobates tricolor

Epipedobates tricolor is a small, dark brown poison frog of 19-23 mm with yellow to yellow-green stripes and spots. It occurs only on the western slopes of the Andes in central Ecuador and is threatened. Almost all "tricolor" in the trade are in fact the closely related *Epipedobates anthonyi*; true *E. tricolor* is rare in terrariums.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates tricolor; Phyllobates tricolor* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**19-23 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-14 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
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	**40 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 3 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-20 °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**
Sexually mature	**5-10 months**
Eggs per clutch	**10-20**
Hatching	**9-14 days** at 22-24 °C
Larval period	**42-80 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	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
One male and two females of *Epipedobates tricolor* need an enclosure of at least 40 × 40 × 40 cm. A group of 5-10 animals needs at least 60 × 60 × 40 cm, preferably 80-100 × 50 × 60 cm.

TEMPERATURE
Keep 22-26 °C during the day with both cooler and warmer zones, and let the temperature drop to 18-20 °C at night. The species comes from mid altitudes and does not like high temperatures.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING
Humidity should be 80-100 %. The species tolerates down to 50 % for short periods if it has access to water, but low humidity without water can quickly become fatal.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY
Make one or more small water holes with about 2 cm of water, e.g. saucers, drinking dishes or half Brazil nut shells that the frogs can easily climb out of. The male may use them to deposit tadpoles.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The lighting is for the plants. Fluorescent tubes or LED bars for about 12 hours a day are enough, and the day length can vary slightly over the year.

FEEDING
Epipedobates tricolor is small but greedy and takes relatively large prey.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
The males of *Epipedobates tricolor* call with a soft, trilling voice, mostly in the morning and especially after misting, most often from an elevated perch.

NATIVE RANGE
Ecuador.