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POISON DART FROGS

Polkadot Poison Frog

Oophaga arborea

Oophaga arborea is a small poison dart frog of 20-22 mm that lives high up in the trees in the humid montane forest of western Panama. It is black or brown with round yellow spots, breeds in bromeliads 10-16 m above the ground, and the tadpoles feed only on eggs from the female. The species is critically endangered.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates arboreus* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-22 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**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	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 80 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**20-24 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-19 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
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	**In leaf axils (e.g. bromeliads)**
Eggs per clutch	**4-8**
Hatching	**14 days**
Larval period	**40-50 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	**Critically Endangered (CR)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Almost nothing is known about the husbandry of *Oophaga arborea*, and the species is almost unknown in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature should be 20-24 °C, and at night it should fall by at least 4-5 °C, to about 15-19 °C. This corresponds to the climate of the cloud forest with an annual mean temperature of about 19 °C.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be 70-80 % by day and rise to 100 % at night. Use plenty of mist and rain, and let the enclosure dry quickly afterwards with the help of a fan; stagnant, wet air is dangerous.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	A water bowl is not necessary. The frogs get moisture from mist, rain and the water-filled bromeliads, which are also used for the tadpoles.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species lives high up in the canopy, where the light is stronger than on the forest floor, but the mist dampens it.
FEEDING	Adults are fed small, flightless fruit flies, springtails, newly hatched micro crickets and field plankton; the same feeder insects are used for the other species of the genus.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Oophaga arborea* is a diurnal tree frog that is rarely seen on the ground.
NATIVE RANGE	Panama.