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POISON DART FROGS

Strawberry Poison Frog

Oophaga pumilio

Oophaga pumilio is a small, diurnal poison frog of 17-24 mm from the rainforests of Central America, known for its many colour forms and an unusual form of parental care: the female feeds each tadpole with unfertilised eggs. It is fascinating to watch, but requires experience, small feeder insects and patience.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates pumilio* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**17-24 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10-15 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	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-21 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1 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	**10 months**
Eggs per clutch	**3-5**
Hatching	**10-14 days**
Larval period	**42-56 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	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A pair needs a tall terrarium of at least about 38 litres, and up to four animals about 76 litres. A terrarium of 45 × 45 × 45 cm (about 90 litres) is therefore a good minimum for a small group.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature should be 22-26 °C and the night 19-21 °C. The extremes are 20-29 °C, with about 24 °C during the day and a drop to around 20 °C at night.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be high, 70-100 %. Aim for 70-80 % during the day and up to 100 % at night, for example by misting four times a day with an automatic system. A timer-controlled rain system is therefore a great advantage.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	A shallow water dish is enough, but the water must be no more than about ¾ of the frog's height, in practice under 1 cm, because the species swims poorly and can drown.
LIGHTING AND UVB	Give 12 hours of light a day, so that the plants thrive. An LED plant lamp that does not give off much heat is a good choice.
FEEDING	*Oophaga pumilio* needs very small feeder insects, no more than about 2 mm. Small, flightless *Drosophila melanogaster* and springtails are the staple, supplemented with aphids, termites and other small feeder insects.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Oophaga pumilio* is diurnal, bold and inquisitive and moves about a great deal in the leaf litter. The males defend territories with a buzzing, cricket-like call and may fight other males.
NATIVE RANGE	Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.