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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Palmate newt

Lissotriton helveticus

Lissotriton helveticus is a small newt of 5-10 cm from western Europe. It is recognised by its unspotted throat and, in the breeding season, by the male's thin tail filament and black webbing between the hind toes. The species is cool-loving and adaptable, more aquatic than most small newts, and thrives in a cool aquaterrarium.

Family: Salamandridae English name: Palmate Newt Former name: *Triturus helveticus* Published 16 November 2026 **Mild skin toxins**

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**5-10 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**4-12 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**10-18 °C**
Temperature, night	**8-14 °C**
Humidity	**80-100%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 10-20 cm
Water temperature	**10-18 °C**
UVB	**Not required**
Winter rest	**5-10 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies) and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Eggs per season	**150-440**
Hatching	**8-28 days**
Larval period	**45-105 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Lissotriton helveticus is more aquatic than most small newts, and in a set-up many animals stay in the water for most of the year and go on land only for a short period in late summer.

TEMPERATURE

Lissotriton helveticus is cool-loving. The daytime temperature is 10-18 °C and the night-time temperature 8-14 °C. Temperatures above 20 °C for long periods should be avoided.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

The skin dries out quickly, so humidity over the land section must be 80-100 %. Spray the land section with dechlorinated water once or twice a day, and let the moss and soil retain moisture without it becoming swampy.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

The water section is 10-20 cm deep and 10-18 °C. Use dechlorinated tap water, tap water that has stood for a few days, or rainwater. The species readily lives in acidic, soft waters and tolerates low pH, but chlorine is harmful.

LIGHTING AND UVB

UVB is not necessary for the species, which lives hidden and is nocturnal. Ordinary LED light for 10-12 hours a day gives the plants what they need, and more light in spring helps bring the animals into breeding condition.

FEEDING

Lissotriton helveticus eats all small animals it can swallow. In the water it is given daphnia, tubifex, mosquito larvae and frozen bloodworms, and it also takes frozen food from the bottom.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is peaceful and can be kept in pairs or in groups with more females than males, so the females get peace in the breeding season. Many plants and good hides also help.

NATIVE RANGE

United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Czechia, Spain and Portugal.