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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Fire Salamander

Salamandra salamandra

Salamandra salamandra is the black salamander with yellow spots or stripes that lives in European deciduous forests. It grows to 14-21 cm, is nocturnal and can live for more than 20 years. The species gives birth to live larvae in water, has mild skin toxins and tolerates heat poorly, so it needs a cool and very clean enclosure.

Family: Salamandridae Published 16 November 2026 **Mild skin toxins**

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**14-21 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**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	**80 × 40 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 3 adults
Temperature, day	**12-20 °C**
Temperature, night	**10-15 °C**
Humidity	**75-90%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 2-3 cm
UVB	**Not required**
Winter rest	**4-6 °C** 6-10 weeks
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Development	**Gives birth to larvae in water**
Sexually mature	**24-48 months**
Litter size	**20-40 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Larval period	**40-150 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Other larvae and small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

For 2-3 *Salamandra salamandra*, the enclosure needs a floor area of at least 80 × 40 cm, preferably 100 × 50 cm, and a height of about 30 cm.

TEMPERATURE

Salamandra salamandra is a cool-climate animal. In summer the temperature in the enclosure must not exceed 20 °C, and ordinary room temperature in an unheated room is enough during the active part of the year.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

The humidity should be about 75-90 %, while the substrate must be relatively dry. Too much ground moisture inevitably causes skin problems.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

All animals must have a water bowl with an easy exit, because the species is a poor swimmer and can drown. The bowl holds 2-3 cm of water and is wide enough for the animal to lie in.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species does not need UVB. It is nocturnal, and the daylight in an ordinary room with windows is enough, as long as the sun does not shine directly in. Strong light makes the animals hide.

FEEDING

Salamandra salamandra eats only animal food. In the wild at least 60-70 % of the diet consists of slugs, earthworms, spiders, centipedes and beetles.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Salamandra salamandra is shy and nocturnal and spends most of the day in hiding. Most animals learn to take food from tweezers and come out when feeding.

NATIVE RANGE

Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.