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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Emperor Crocodile Newt

Tylototriton shanjing

Tylototriton shanjing is a robust, dark brown crocodile newt from Yunnan in south-western China with a bright orange head, dorsal ridge, gland warts and tail. It grows to 12-20 cm, lives on land almost all year and enters the water only to breed. The animal is calm and hardy, but its skin secretes a toxic substance, so wash your hands after any contact.

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

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-20 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Montane forest**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**24 months**
Eggs per season	**30-150**
Hatching	**10-12 days** at 22-25 °C
Larval period	**90-150 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Other larvae and small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**75 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**18-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-20 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
Tylototriton shanjing is a terrestrial newt that needs water only in the breeding season. Four adults can be kept in an enclosure of 75 × 30 × 30 cm; floor area is more important than height, and a pair needs at least 60 × 30 cm.

TEMPERATURE
The daytime temperature is 18-25 °C and the night temperature 15-20 °C. In winter the animals are kept cooler, around 15-17 °C, on a drier substrate; in summer it may well reach 24-26 °C.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING
The species prefers fairly dry conditions, drier than other terrestrial crocodile newts. 60-80 % humidity is an estimate. Mist lightly so that the wet end of the substrate is always damp, and leave the dry end dry.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY
Outside the breeding season the water is a shallow bowl with sloping sides and dechlorinated tap water, changed regularly. In the breeding season there must be a larger water area of at least 30 × 30 cm (see "Mating").

LIGHTING AND UVB
Tylototriton shanjing is active at dusk and at night and lives hidden, so it rarely comes out while the light is on. UVB is not necessary. The lighting is for the plants; an LED bulb that gives off almost no heat is enough.

FEEDING
Earthworms are the best staple food; large earthworms are cut into suitable pieces.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
The animal is calm and slow and can become very tame: many beg for food at the glass once they have got used to their keeper. It is still not an animal for daily handling.

NATIVE RANGE
China.

The full guide with map and updates: herpy.org/salamandre/tylototriton-shanjing