

Caring for your new African dwarf frog Hymenochirus boettgeri

Aquatic frogs are cute, fun to watch and great companions. But before you bring one home for a pet, review the following basic care instructions so that you can prepare for the arrival of your new friend.

Easy step by step set up

1. Find a place out of direct sunlight and drafts to set up your new African dwarf frog tank.
2. Rinse/wipe down the entire tank (inside and out) and all decorations with clean water (NO, soaps, detergents or other cleaning materials).
3. Place substrate in bottom of the tank.
4. Fill the tank with dechlorinated water.
5. Set up your water filter according to the manufacturer's instructions.
6. Add any desired tank decorations.
7. Acclimatize your new pet to the tank water temperature by floating its bag in the tank for five to ten minutes.
8. Release your frog into its new home.

About your frog

The African Dwarf Frog, *H. boettgeri*, is a primarily aquatic amphibian species of the sub-family *Xenopus* that inhabits slow moving waters in the rainforests of central and western Africa. These tiny amphibians will grow to only 3.5 cm in length (1.5 inches!) as adults yet they are reported to have a life expectancy of 10 to 20 years in captivity.

Creating a Habitat for your frog

Materials



Picking a tank

Select a tank for your frogs that has a cover, space for a water filter (not necessary but suggested) and plenty of room for your frog. 2 frogs can live in a small, 1 1/5 gallon tank, however if you plan on getting more frogs in the future, or adding fish to the tank, select a larger tank. The more space your frogs have to live in, the happier and healthier they will be. Rinse out your new tank with water but no soap. Put your tank in a place where you will see it and appreciate your frog throughout the day.

Lighting and temperature conditions

Your frog's tank should be in a room with a fairly constant temperature and natural light, but not in direct sunlight and away from heating or cooling vents. African dwarf frogs are tropical amphibians and require water temperatures between 78 and 84 degrees Fahrenheit.

Adding substrate



Add clean substrate, like pebbles or marbles, to line the bottom of the tank. Be sure to thoroughly rinse all substrate in clean water (without soap) before adding them to your tank.

Filling your tank



Place a bowl or jar in the substrate of the tank and then fill the tank by pouring water into the jar, this will prevent the force of the water from moving the substrate. After adding the water you can add your filter according to the manufactures' instructions along with a heater and any additional tank decorations, like rocks or artificial plants.



Conditioning your water



Tap water must be conditioned before introducing your frog to its tank. For immediate water conditioning you can simply add one capful of **HBH bowl prep** for every $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of tap water in the aquarium. You can also condition your water by allowing it to stand in an open container overnight. By "aging" the tap water overnight, harmful chemicals like chlorine will dissolve into the air making the water safe for your frog.

Introducing your frog to its new home



The first rule in transporting your frog is to minimize stress. Never touch your frog more than necessary and always wet your hands first as the salts and oils on your hand can be damaging to its sensitive skin. Before introducing your frog directly into its new home first check to make sure that the aquarium water temperature is at least 78 degrees Fahrenheit. Next, place your frog, in its bag from the pet store, in the prepared tank for 15 minutes. This will allow your frog to acclimate to the water temperature in the new tank. After the acclimation period release your frog into the tank. This first day is stressful so do not feed him and avoid disturbing him any more than necessary.

Caring for your frog

Feeding



African dwarf frogs thrive on HBH Frog and Tadpole bites. The small food pellets sink to the bottom of the tank where frogs feed. Each frog requires only a 4-6 pellets a day. Be sure to watch how much your frog actually eats and remove any uneaten pellets after about five minutes to avoid water quality issues. You can also feed your frogs frozen pieces of bloodworm for a special treat.

Tank maintenance



Maintain the water quality in your frogs' tank with weekly partial water changes. To minimize the disturbance to your frogs, use a cup and gently scoop out 10% of the tank water and then replace it with new, clean, conditioned water. If algae or other debris builds up in the substrate you may be over-feeding your frogs. You can use a siphon to clean out debris from the substrate, or transfer your frogs along with some of their water into a separate tank while you clean the main tank. Avoid total water changes if possible as it is stressful for the frogs.

Other fun things

Plants

You can add live plants and even fish to your frog's habitat. Before adding any decoration or plant to the tank, be sure to rinse it thoroughly.

Fish

New fish should be kept in a separate 'quarantine' tank for at least a week as they can carry diseases that may infect your frogs. If you choose to add fish to your frog's tank, be sure to use a filter and be extra diligent about water changes.