



FROGLANDIA CARE SHEETS

Dendrobates Auratus

Difficulty: Novice to Intermediate

Native Habitat: Humid lowlands from southern Nicaragua to the Golfo de Urabá in Colombia on the Caribbean and on the Pacific slope from southwestern Costa Rica through Panama to the lower Atrato River drainage of western Colombia, 0-900 m elevation. They were introduced in Oahu, Hawaii, USA, for pest control. They are considered an invasive species, but are endemic there now.

Longevity: 5-8 years or more.

Size: Varies by variety, but 1" for males and 1.5" for females is a good generalization.

Temperature Range: 68-78F A temperature drop at night is appreciated. As if a cooling period during the year simulating the change of seasons.

Humidity: 60%-90% with 70-80% as the sweet spot. (higher humidity can lead to mold growth and generally is a sign of air stagnation. Air flow should never become stagnant.)

Housing: Dendrobates Auratus require a fair amount of space, despite their diminutive size. A vivarium of 18"x18"x12" high will house a pair adequately. They are a terrestrial species but will climb and enjoy all levels of a well- designed vivarium. Auratus do best either housed in sexed pairs, all male groups or large groups of males and females in a ratio of two males to each female. They are territorial and will fight over breeding sites and feeding locations, so it's important to provide lots of hiding spots and cover. These frogs will thrive in a naturalistic planted vivarium of standard "bioactive" construction. Salting the vivarium with springtails and isopods (rolly-pollies) will help with waste recycling and provide extra tidbits of food. False bottom drainage construction and ABG or Turface soil layers should be covered with deep leaf litter. Lids must be escape proof and limited in screen coverage. Humidity is important and an off the shelf habitat: such as an ecoterra or zoomed terrarium will dry out too fast without covering around 80% of the screen with glass or plastic. Screens should be of a fine mesh to keep fruit flies and other small prey items inside, and interpersonal relationships intact. There is debate about the need for UVB with D. auratus; vitamin D can (and should) be supplied with powdered supplements. These amphibians are not pond dwellers but prefer moist leaf litter as their main habitat. They do appreciate the availability of water, but don't over-do it. Waterfalls

and moving water features are unnecessary. They can drown in deep water. They do not enjoy a swim.

Feeding: These anurans (your new word, now that you are keeping frogs) are insectivores. They feed on LIVE insects and will not take artificial food- regardless of what anyone tells you. The staple diet is Hydei fruit flies, but Bean beetles, pinhead crickets and even termites make for tasty variety in their diet. Feed every other day and occasionally skip to a third day. Adults need less food than growing sub-adults. Growing froglings can be fed daily. Don't OVERFEED; if they are plump you're feeding them too much. They should be lean, but full-bodied. Fatty frogs suffer the same maladies as overweight.. anything. Obesity will shorten their life span. Calcium dust supplementation should be done with every feeding. The only time you don't want to dust with Calcium is when you are dusting with other vitamins, which should happen twice a month or so. You can also occasionally dust with carotenoids to enhance their color. Repashy Superpig is an example. All of my frogs live on Repashy calcium, vitamins and I raise fruit flies on Repashy Superfly. This is not a shameless plug, there are other fine supplements out there, but I call it like I see it. Supplementation is more important than brand names- just don't use cheap, out of date stuff from a Pet Supermarket or Box store.

Breeding: Males will call when they are mature and females will oblige. These frogs are generally easy to breed. They will lay eggs for you in a petri dish, or other suitable dish with a bit of water in it under a coconut hide. You could also use a small inverted flower pot. In nature they would lay eggs on a leaf, but they love clean dishes, so don't over think it. Supplement breeding frogs with Vitamin A once a month or so to increase vitality of eggs and avoid possible malformations or failures of metamorphosis.

The dish of eggs should be removed and the eggs covered HalfWay with distilled, mineral or R.O. water. Eggs will hatch in several weeks to a month or so, depending on temperature, elevation, etc. Watching them develop and checking with online sources will make the development stage plain to see, and therefore indicate when hatching is immanent.

I transfer hatchlings to their own cups (3-4 oz. in liquid volume in a 6-8oz cups). You can raise them together, auratus are not as prone to cannibalism as some other species of Dart frogs. Put a sprig of java moss and a chunk of almond leaf in each cup, this promotes micro fauna which they can graze on. Feed a good quality tadpole food, it should sink. Frog larvae are detritivores- this means they eat all sorts of living and decayed stuff from the pond bottom. I use Repashy Soylent green, but zoomed and Josh's Frogs have their own brands that are just fine. A mixture of plant and fish proteins are good. Many people are down on tad chow that contains wheat Gluten. I have yet to encounter a frog with Celiac disease, however, and a little as a glue is often used to make the pellets sink. So, don't get paranoid, if they are growing you are a good parent. Auratus tadpoles will make it to metamorphosis in 3-5 months. Rear legs will pop out first, and then front legs will appear just before emergence. Get them out of the cups before they

emerge! They will either escape and dry up or drown if you don't get them out before their tails are absorbed and they become land critters.

Metamorphosis: A simple sterilite shoebox tilted at an angle with water flowing down into the lower one-third is an adequate metamorphosis chamber. Make sure there's ventilation and it is humid. You can put some damp moss on the "land" side of the chamber. They will venture out of water before the tail is fully absorbed. Watch for it. It's incredibly cool!

After your babies are hopping around on land, move them to a grow out. This can be another plastic shoebox with some peatmoss or ABG on the bottom, some leaf litter and live plant cuttings- mist daily. Seed this box with springtails, isopods are not necessary, this is a temporary billet. Feed them melanogaster (the smaller ones) fruit flies once the tail is absorbed. They won't eat until the tail is gone, they are still metamorphosing, and the last stage is the mouth changing from a tadpole sucker to a frog mouth. They will grow to vivarium size in 3-5 months.

-By Ravage, @ Froglandia

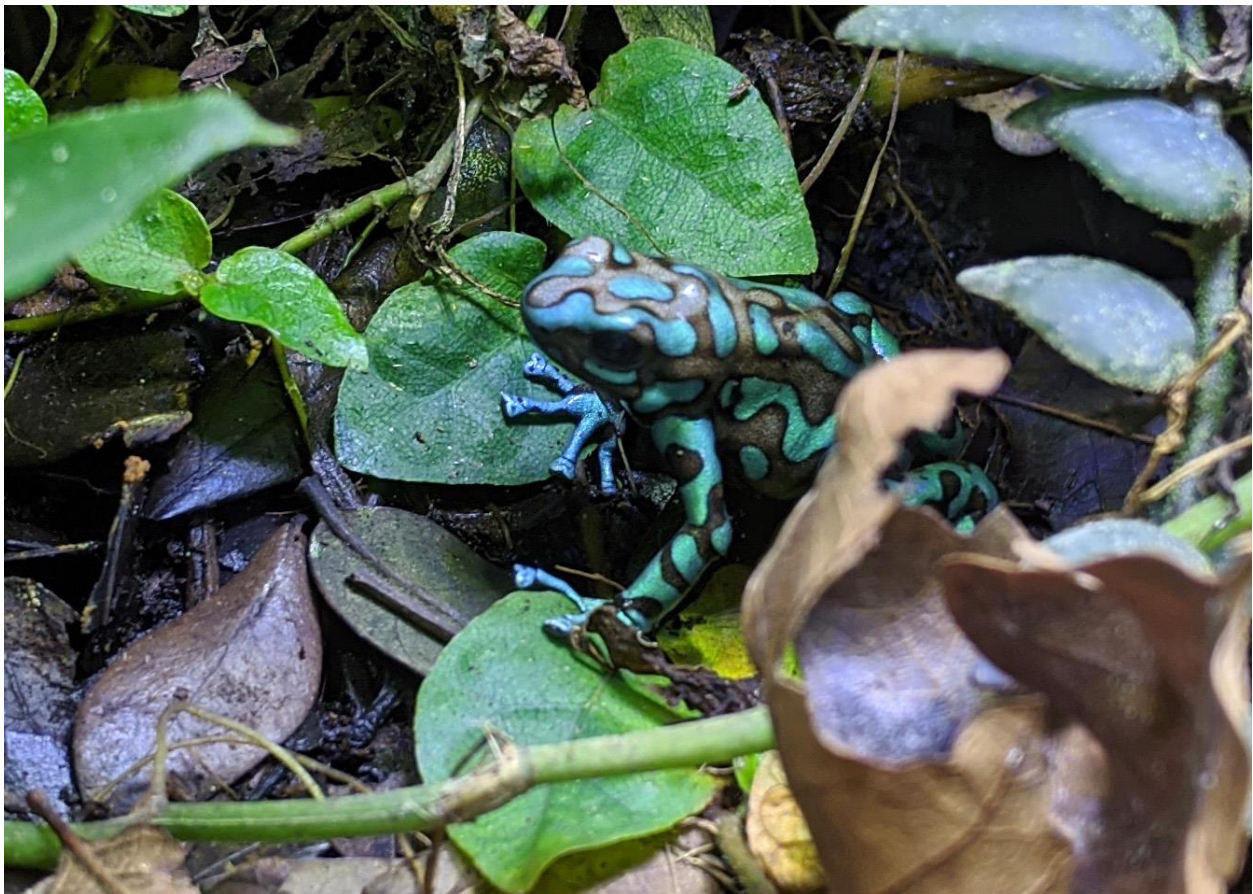


Figure 1 *Dedrobates auratus*- Highland bronze