

African dwarf frog



(*Hymenochirus*)

Origin: Equatorial Africa

Size: Up to 1.25 inches

Life Span: 5 years Temperature: 74°F-84°F

Congratulations on your new pet! African dwarf frogs are delightful little amphibians that come from rivers and streams in Central Africa and are fully aquatic. They have a weird floating habit when in the water called the “Zen position.” With arms and legs outstretched and one foot balancing, it’s as if these frogs are meditating on some sublime aspect of amphibious life (or they’re just reminiscing their previous life as a prince.) While their skin is really thin and absorbs a lot of oxygen from the water, they do have lungs and will go to the surface for a gulp of air.

SETTING UP THE BOWL

Equipment – bowl, gravel, water conditioner, and aquarium salt. An air pump, filter, and liquid biological bacteria are optional and help keep the tank cleaner.

Rinse both the bowl and the gravel with regular tap water thoroughly. **Do not** use soap or any other chemicals. This is the last time the gravel will be cleaned. Tap water conditioner removes the chlorine and chloramines we put in our drinking water to keep it germ free. Aquarium salt is a useful treatment for sores, infections, parasites, and functions as a precautionary measure against disease organisms as it stimulates the frog’s production of slime coating. Use about 6 drops per gallon of the tap water conditioner and ½ teaspoon of salt per gallon.

Filling and treating a gallon jug of water, and setting it aside for water changes, is an easy way to pre-measure out your additives and makes water changes easier.

- 1) Fill the bowl halfway with your pretreated water.
- 2) Float the bag within the bowl for about twenty minutes to acclimate the frog to room temperature.
- 3) After twenty minutes release the frog into the bowl and fill the bowl within two inches from the top.

FEEDING

Proper nutrition is important for the long-term health of the frog. In the wild, they eat a wide variety of insects, invertebrates, and small fish. In captivity, they can be fed various fish pellets, bloodworms, and brine shrimp. They should be fed a tiny pinch or about two pellets of food once or twice a day, skipping an occasional meal. If any food remains after thirty seconds, they are being overfed; cut the amount of food in half.

BOWL MAINTENANCE

Unfortunately, the volume of water is so small that toxic levels of frog/plant waste: ammonia and nitrite can quickly accumulate and become fatal. For this reason, 25 - 50% water changes every few days are recommended. The following procedure is suggested.

- 1) Make your water changed easier by using a one gallon jug, premeasured with your salt and water conditioner.
- 2) Wipe down the inside of the bowl with an algae pad, if necessary.
- 3) Stir the gravel gently and carefully pour out 25 - 50% of the water. Removing the frog tends to be more work and stresses the animal out, so just keep your hand by the lip to prevent it from falling out..
- 4) Refill the bowl with the preconditioned, room temperature water, and straighten your gravel and decorations.

Fortunately, there are microorganisms at work that convert ammonia into nitrite, and then nitrite into nitrate; each gas being less harmful than the one preceding it. However these organisms can only help the ecosystem; if water changes are neglected, the beneficial bacteria can easily become overwhelmed and the ecosystem is liable to crash.