

Preparing a Poison Dart Frog Terrarium

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About The Poison Dart Frog

- Members of the Dendrobatidae family
- More than 100 species, all varying in size, color, and pattern
- Coloration is used to warn predators of their toxicity
- Native to tropical forests of Central and South America
- Found near streams and among the leaf litter
- Females deposit their eggs onto wet leaves submerged in quiet, shallow pools
- Eat small insects: ants, termites, and beetles

Items Needed

- 10 gallon tank
- Hydroballs
- Moss
- Live plants
- Water pump and hose (optional)
- Plastic screen (optional)
- Shelter
- Petri dish
- Index cards
- Glass Lid
- Large stones
- Small & medium sized stones (optional)
- Bio-bag
- Zip tie
- Reverse osmosis (R.O.) or distilled water
- Fluorescent light
- Scissors and tape

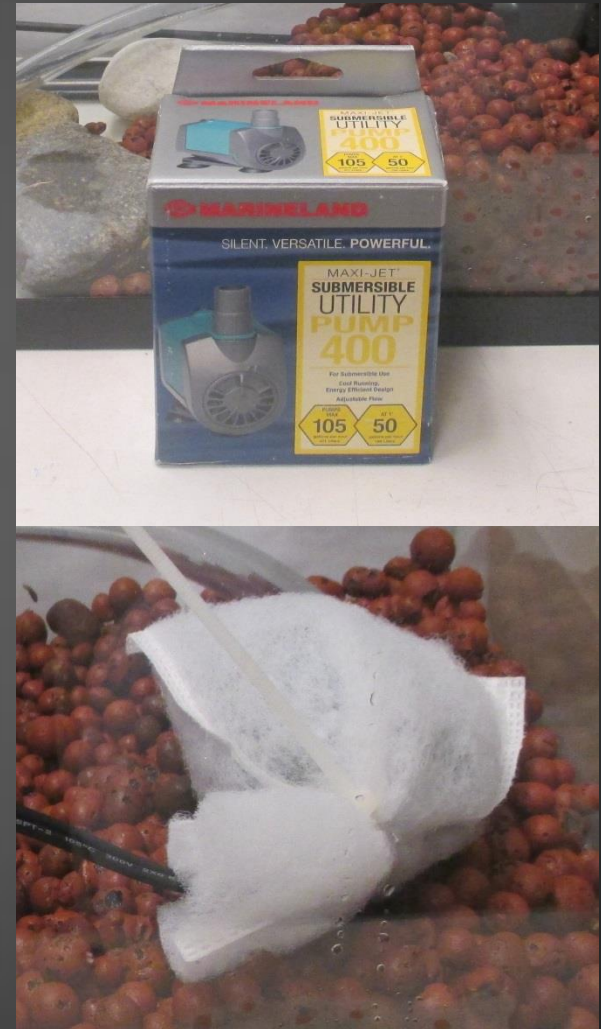
Step 1: Preparatory Work

- Pre-soak moss until soft and damp
- Rinse the tank and all materials that will be placed inside the tank with R.O./distilled water (ex: stones, hydroballs, plants, water pump, etc.)



Step 2: The pump (optional)

- Place pump into the bio-bag – this keeps the pump from being clogged by moss
- Cut a small hole in the bio-bag and attach the hose to the pump through the hole
- Tie off the open end of the bio-bag with a zip tie
- Cut the excess plastic tail from the zip tie



Step 3: Structure

- Cover about 1 / 3 of the tank with hydroballs (expanded clay pellets)
- If using a pump, burry it in the back corner of the tank with the hose extended toward the space designated for water.
- Place the plastic screen and/or large rocks on the open end of the hydroballs to create a ramp
 - Helps keep hydroballs in place
 - Gives the frogs a safe medium upon which they may enter and exit the water



Step 4: Substrate

- Add pre-soaked moss on top of the hydroballs
- Moss should be about 0.5 - 1 inch thick



Step 5: Plant life

- Add live plants to the tank, burying their roots in the moss
- Safe plants to use: calathea and anthurium species, pothos, and ficus vines, tropical gingers, bromeliads, etc.
- Leave room for a shelter



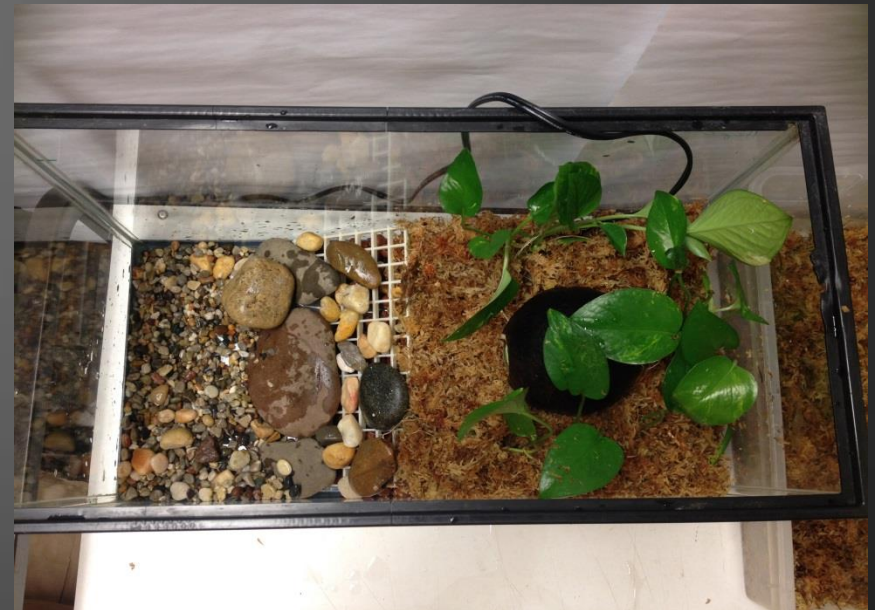
Step 6: Shelter

- Place a clean petri dish into the tank with a fresh leaf and R.O. or distilled water inside
- Cover the petri dish with the shelter (coconut huts or flower pots work well)



Step 7: Optional

- Add smaller rocks of varying size to the ramp and water basin
- Branches or other decorative items may be added as well



Step 8: Water

- Add R.O. or distilled water to the aquarium through the substrate
- Make sure the water pump is completely submerged
- The water level should not surpass the hydroballs
- Add frog species label/information to the front of the tank (optional)



Step 9: The Lid

- Place the glass lid on top of the tank
- Tape the tank to the lid to ensure it is secure
- Fill any open spaces by taping index card pieces over them
 - Decreases the likelihood of a frog escaping



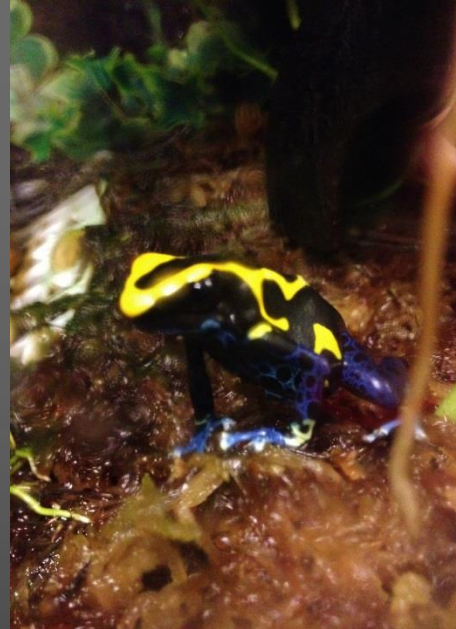
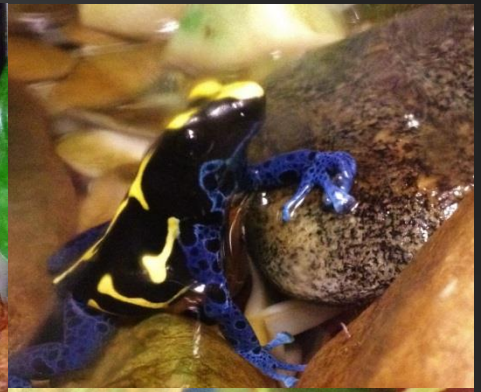
Step 10: Lighting

- Tape a decorative paper background to the outside of the tank (optional)
- Place a fluorescent light on top of the lid (for plants)



Step 11: Done!

- Turn on pump to begin water circulation
- Add the frogs
- Enjoy!



Taking Care of Your Frogs

- If not using a pump, the tank requires cleaning more often.
- Any water added to the tank should be reverse osmosis (R.O.) water or distilled water. Tap water contains chemicals (like chlorine) which can harm the frogs.
- Water should always be added to the substrate side of the tank so it can pick up minerals. Plain R.O. and distilled water are considered “too clean.”
- The fluorescent light should be turned off at night to mimic day and night hours. This is especially important for the plants.
- The tank’s humidity should be kept above 80% and the temperature should not drop below 70F.
- Algal growth can be removed by scrubbing the tank with a paper towel.
- Feeding should occur daily. They can eat fruit flies or very small crickets. Their food should be mixed with a vitamin supplemental powder.
- Frogs should only be handled or touched if necessary. Make sure hands are clean and wet before any physical contact occurs.

Sources

- <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/amazonia/facts/fact-poisondartfrog.cfm>
- <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/amphibians/poison-frog/>
- <http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Reptile-Magazines/Reptiles-Magazine/August-2010/Dart-Frog-Vivarium-Plants/>