



# komodo®

## CARE GUIDE



# AMPHIBIANS

**AMPHIBIANS** are an amazing group of animals. They're diverse in life styles and even body forms but all are connected by the need to be bound to water. The word Amphibia is from the Greek meaning "double life" and refers to their ability to sometimes live on land and sometimes in the water.

Most people readily recognize frogs and toads and understand them to be amphibians. There are reckoned to be over 4,700 species of frogs and they occur on every continent except Antarctica. Unsurprisingly they are most abundant in tropical forests. Habitats range from mainly living underground to tree frogs living high off the soil in plants and trees.

Many species of frog and toads are regularly available at different life stages thanks to successful breeding by hobbyists and commercial breeders. Dart frogs previously considered next to impossible to keep are now flourishing thanks to increased knowledge and new innovative reptile keeping equipment. White's Tree Frogs remain a popular choice with their forever enigmatic smiles. There are quite a number of frog and toad species of all sizes and colours that make interesting and enjoyable pets if provided with the correct conditions.

Newts and salamanders are seen less often and perhaps are less understood by the general public. There are over 600 species with most found in the cooler temperate areas of the northern hemispheres. There is a more limited number of species available to be companion animals. Some species are more aquatic than others. In fact the Central American Axolotl is the Peter Pan of salamanders and remains in a larval stage all of its life, even being able to reproduce.

Like any pet, looking after a frog or salamander is a big commitment for the life of the animal. Although most species are easy to care for, they will require daily attention.

It is extremely important to research the needs of your amphibian pet before assembling its home. Different animal's needs will dictate how the terrarium is established. Getting it right means you will enjoy your pet for many years to come. As an example, Axolotls can live up to 15 years. White's Tree Frogs have been known to live 20 years. Fire Salamanders are long lived creatures at up to 30 years.

## 6 QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH YOUR PET AMPHIBIAN:

### 1) USE BOTTLED WATER (PLAIN NOT SPARKLING)

Clean water is the most important element in keeping any amphibian happy and healthy. Chlorine and Chloramines that are commonly added to tap water can prove fatal for amphibians.

### 2) KEEP COOL.

Many amphibians prefer cooler temperatures and will quickly get distressed if the temperature goes up. Even species such as Poison Dart Frogs and Pacman Frogs, that prefer daytime temperatures of 21C to 27C, will suffer if the heat rises over their preferred thermal reading.

### 3) MEASURE THE RELATIVE HUMIDITY.

Many frogs and salamanders will require a humidity level of 50 to 60%. Some species do best when the humidity is at least 70% and even approaching 100%. To achieve that it may be necessary to partially cover the screening on the terrarium. This can be done very simply by using cling film or plastic wrap.

### 4) EVERY ANIMAL LIKES A HIDE TO CALL HOME.

From the biggest African Bullfrog to the tiny thumbnail Ranitomeya Dart Frogs, animals need to be able to hide away and feel safe and secure. Depending on individual species, the Komodo Amphibian Starter Kit has a range of items including Bark, Moss, artificial plants and Tropical Terrain substrate that will do the job.

### 5) LET THERE BE LIGHT.

Generally amphibians will be happy with the ambient room lighting.

Be careful about putting a basking lamp over the terrarium. It might do more harm than good for most species. A basking lamp may quickly dry the air out and reduce the very important relative humidity.

Where lighting is required it is best to use a low powered Komodo fluorescent tube. This can have the added benefit of providing small amounts of UVB light to the animals without much heat production. Opinions are still varied whether UVB lighting is required for certain species like Dart Frogs but it will certainly do them no harm to be exposed to it.

### 6) BE CAREFUL WHAT HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS YOU USE NEAR THE CAGE.

All amphibians have soft porous skins to help exchange water through the epidermis. This means, like fish, they are extremely easy to poison with many household chemicals. Check the packaging and if it says care around fish tanks then the same applies to amphibians.



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## ASSEMBLING THE KOMODO AMPHIBIAN STARTER KIT

### HOUSING:

The glass terrarium in this starter kit is large enough to provide a permanent home for many species of popular pet amphibian and will be a great starter home for others. The terrarium will hold water up to just below the side wire mesh. This feature can be important when designing and arranging the habitat for Bombina frogs or similar animals that are semi-aquatic and enjoy a larger water to land ratio.

The terrarium is able to have quite a deep layer of substrate, which depending how moist and fine, could even exceed the bottom of the side screen.

### MONITORING:

The Dual Gauge is often placed in the driest and hottest part of the habitat to measure the most extreme temperature. This is because over heating will cause an animal to die faster then any other cause. Consider purchasing an additional gauge to position at the opposite end of the terrarium.

### DECOR:

Research the animals needs before decorating the terrarium. As an example, Tree frogs would enjoy the artificial plants being placed vertically high on the glass so they can strategically hide themselves on it. Fire Bellied Toads would desire a plant floating on a water surface so that they can both rest on it in the water and remain hidden beneath it. It's horses for courses as the saying goes.

### SUBSTRATE:

The Tropical Terrain Compact brick is a suitable substrate for most amphibian set ups. The brick is soaked in approximately 1/2 a bucket of water to allow for expansion and breaking down into a soil like texture. One of the many advantages of this substrate is that by adding more water or letting the product dry out slightly, the consistency can be altered for virtually any requirement. Using the spray bottle included in the kit on a daily basis can maintain or increase the moisture of the substrate and the overall terrarium humidity.

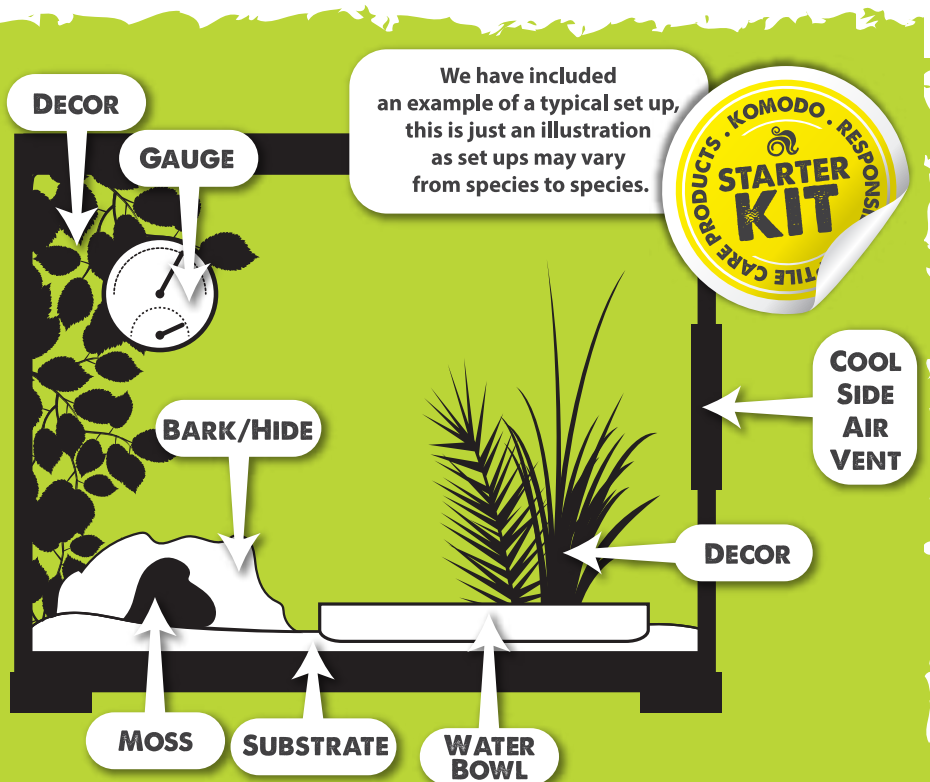
### NUTRITION:

All amphibians are carnivorous, eating a variety of insects and worms usually. Larger frogs are known to consume small rodents on occasion. Many amphibians will only eat insects that are alive as opposed to dried or tinned.

If feeding live crickets be careful of putting excessive amounts in the cage that won't be consumed straight away. Crickets are omnivores and are quite capable of giving soft bodied amphibians a good bite on their soft skin if the cricket becomes hungry. This is more likely to happen if crickets remain in the cage after feeding time, hide away and come out later searching for food themselves. It is quite amazing how quickly crickets grow and become too large a food item for your pet.

Even offering a variety of different insects in captivity will not guarantee a healthy diet and animals require the addition of a quality vitamin and mineral supplement to nutritionally balance the diet.

It is recommended to dust live food at every feed. This prevents animals from starving themselves on the day of dusting knowing that the next day the insects will be dust free. The Komodo vitamin powder included in the kit is specially milled for maximum adherence to all live food including fruit flies.



In conclusion, amphibians are fascinating companion animals that offer a chance to have a real slice of nature in the terrarium. Even shy animals will, in time, become used to being viewed and provide intriguing and compelling behaviours to watch.



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