

Australian Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*

This wonderful, large green chubby, smiling frog is the most suitable tree frog for the pet keeper. Native to New Guinea and much of Northern and Eastern Australia, they prefer forest but are also common around human habitation. Reaching 5–10cm (2–4in) in length, they live for about 15 years.



These wonderfully robust tree frogs are the easiest to handle amphibian in this book and probably the most popular pet frog in the world.

Creating the right environment

Tall vivaria are required for most tree frogs and these are no exception. A vivarium that measures 60 x 45 x 30cm (24 x 18 x 12in) and is decorated with a branch, plants or logs is ideal for a few frogs. A substrate of moss, bark chips or pebbles is recommended, but abarer base is sufficient and will be much easier to clean.

A large bowl of water should always be offered, and a daily mist spraying is beneficial for the frogs. However, make sure there is a reasonable amount of ventilation to prevent excess dampness. Keep the temperature at 25–30°C (77–86°F) during the day and reduce slightly at night. Only keep similarly sized animals together.

Handling

Australian Tree Frogs are very easy to handle. They climb and stick to your hands quite well, but they may at times leap or jump. When they are first held, they may expel some liquid from their anus. Often assumed to be urine, it is, in fact, only water which the frog absorbs from its water dish in order to keep moist and to provide it with a store of water in case of drought.

Feeding

Australian Green Tree Frogs generally feed on insects, locusts and earthworms but they are also capable of eating vertebrates, such as small frogs and lizards. The occasional pinkie mouse may be offered. Only feed as much as will be consumed over a short period a few times a week. Easy to feed, these frogs enjoy food but they are prone to obesity, so be careful not to over-feed them.

Breeding

After a resting, dry season in the wild, Australian Green Tree Frogs will usually feed, and then, stimulated by the rainfall during the beginning of the onset of the rainy season, they will breed in a few centimetres of water at around 25–30°C (77–86°F). Sometimes this process occurs easily, but an increase in humidity, coupled with simulated rainfall may precipitate the spawning.

Between 200 and 2,000 eggs may be laid, and they will hatch within a day or so. If they are fed well on algae and other microscopic particulate foods, these tadpoles will be ready within four to six weeks to metamorphose into tiny froglets.

must know

At all stages of breeding and rearing, you must ensure that access from the water is possible – to prevent drowning of adults or froglets. Young frogs need small vitamin supplemented foods and they will mature at around 18–24 months of age.



These frogs may change colour according to the temperature within the vivarium. Individuals of the same size may easily be kept together.