

WHITE'S TREE FROG CARE

White's Tree Frogs (*Litoria caerulea*), alternatively known as Dumpy, Green or Smiling tree frogs, are medium-large green-brown frogs. They originate from Australia, Indonesia and New Guinea, but are commonly kept pets in recent years. They are good pets for first time amphibian keepers, being fairly hardy, although they are not always particularly active and are naturally nocturnal.

ACCOMMODATION

- A wooden/plastic vivarium with sliding glass doors makes the most appropriate setup for frogs, being easy to clean, insulate and keep secure. Inside the vivarium, at least one hiding place should be provided which may be half a log, a purpose-built cave, or even just an empty box with a hole cut in the side. Branches of different lengths and diameter should also be placed around the vivarium to allow the frogs to climb up and bask if desired. Water is an essential requirement for any amphibian, and there should be enough available for them to submerge comfortably. Water quality is however, of utmost importance, and appropriate water treatments should be used.
- It is important to use a substrate that is easy to keep clean and replace and is not going to cause a problem if accidentally eaten. Newspaper or damp paper towel is ideal short-term but does not maintain humidity well and for more naturalistic type set ups, cocoa fibre or similar substrates may be considered.
- A vivarium should be "spot-cleaned" daily to remove any droppings or dead insects or uneaten greens. Once a month, the whole vivarium can be cleaned with a disinfectant suitable for amphibians.

TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY

- Amphibians depend on external heat sources to regulate their body temperature, so supplementary heating is required to create a temperature range.
- Typically, a basking area is created using a light emitting spot bulb, providing a basking temperature of ~30°C. This should be kept on for a minimum of 12 hours a day and switched off at night.
- Heat sources must be attached to a thermostat and measured with a digital maximum/minimum thermometer to ensure the tank does not overheat. The cool end should be maintained at ~25°C.
- Background heat can be provided with a heat mat (on the back wall), a tubular heater, a heat plate or a ceramic bulb. This should be set on a thermostat so that the overnight temperature does not drop below ~21°C.
- Heat sources should be guarded to prevent thermal burns.

- Humidity should be checked with a hygrometer placed in the middle of the vivarium and kept ~60-70%. This humidity can be achieved by frequent misting of the vivarium with water.

LIGHTING

- Despite being mostly active at night, tree frogs appear to benefit from UV-b light.
- Various UV lamps are available, but for this species a lamp with a low output should be used to mimic the low-level sunlight they would be exposed to in their wild environment.
- Lamps should be kept on for ~ 12 hours per day and at an appropriate distance from the frog as recommended by the manufacturer.
- All lamps should be changed at least as frequently as manufacturer's instructions or checked regularly for their UV output.

WHAT TO FEED

- White's tree frogs are mainly insectivores in the wild, and in captivity should be offered a variety of invertebrate prey, such as crickets, cockroaches, and locusts. It is important that appropriately sized insects are fed to avoid problems with gastrointestinal impaction. A general guideline is that the insect should never be bigger than the distance between your frog's eyes. Juveniles need feeding every day, with adults only requiring feeding every other day. Beware of overfeeding, a common problem in these frogs.
- Live food should be gut loaded before feeding to your frog, ideally with a complete invertebrate diet for 24 hours prior to feeding. Live food should also be dusted with both vitamin and mineral supplementation regularly. We recommend alternating dusting with a calcium supplement (e.g. Calcidust) and a combined vitamin/mineral supplement (e.g. Nutrobal). Live food should be fed immediately after dusting and ideally removed from the enclosure if not eaten within 30 minutes.