



How to Raise Tadpoles



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Frog tadpoles have gotta be the favorite pet of all time! I know more people who have dealt with tadpoles than goldfish... but then, maybe that says more about the people I know than it does about pet owners in general. But I CAN tell you that raising tadpoles can be much more than just fun- it is easy and educational too!

Here's what you need to know for dealing with tadpoles yourself.

1. First you'll need a suitable container, like an aquarium, fishbowl, plastic garbage bin, paddling pool, or garden pond. Be sure it has good shade---about 3/4 shade is ideal. If you are planning on having a frog pond, be sure there are no Oleanders, Pine trees or other poisonous plants near it! The fallen needles and leaves can be toxic to tadpoles.

2. Tadpoles absolutely depend on having fresh, clean water.

If you take the water from a local stream, creek or pond, be sure it isn't polluted. Ideally, you can get it upstream from any suspected sources like factories, sewers, etc.

If using tap water, let it stand exposed to full sunlight for 5 to 7 days. This will allow the Chlorine to be removed by evaporation.

If you don't have that much time, you can buy de-chlorinating drops at your local fish-carrying pet store. But at least leave the water out overnight, even after using the droplets. Even a little chlorine is deadly to tadpoles.

It is always a good idea to keep a little dechlorinated water on hand.

3. What do tadpoles eat?

Well, I hear they LOVE lettuce. Boil the lettuce for 10 to 15 minutes and then drain it. Chop it up a little, and then you can lay it on a tray to freeze it. For average home ponds, use an icecube tray- 1 cube every couple of days should be enough. For smaller tanks, just lay some flat on a tray and freeze it, and keep it in a baggie in the freezer. Give the tadpoles a pinch every few days.

Remember: too much food will get the water all dirty, and too little will make the tadpoles get nutty and go after each other. If your water gets dirty really fast, slow down on the feeding...and be sure to replace the dirty water with some fresh spare water.

4. The length of frog development from egg to tadpole to frog usually takes between 6 to 12 weeks. But it is also temperature dependant, so during cold spells it may take a bit longer or even be suspended till the temperatures go up.



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For example, eggs laid towards the end of summer may hatch, but tadpoles may stay tadpoles until the Spring/Summer period. So if it's cold and your tadpoles don't seem to be growing up very fast, it's no reason to panic.

5. The length of time a tadpole takes to develop really depends on what kind of frog it came from! I've even heard that some tadpoles can remain in their tadpole stage as long as 8 months, while others only take 6 to 9 weeks!

When the tadpoles start getting close to developing legs, they will need some sort of perch so they can get out of the water. Floating water lily leaves and branches are ideal, but you can also create ledges using stones or even tilting slopes of plastic in tanks.



The tilt of the ledge may be important depending on what type of frog you have. Young tree frogs can climb smooth vertical surfaces such as the plastic pond liners and glass, but the ground dwelling frogs will need a rough slope when the time comes to

climb out of the water.

At this point, if they aren't big enough to eat crickets but are too large to eat lettuce, you can try starting them off with small insects. A good substitute is bloodworms (live is best) which are usually found in pet stores that carry fish. You can try feeding them to the frogs by taking the lid of a jar and turning it upside down. Fill the cap with a bit of warmish water and lay a bunch of the gross wiggly worms in and usually the frogs will find them. Or you can put the worms directly into their water.

One Frogland visitor writes, "Also, in addition to crickets and meal worms, I have found that in the froglet/young frog stage, aphids are a good food source. They are easily found on a certain type of dandelion, so I just snip off a stem and place it in the cage, and the tadpoles have a feast!"

6. If you're rearing the tadpoles outside, keep the garden well watered and well vegetated. Young frogs will need a lot of ground cover to hide. There is not much point in rearing frogs in a totally hostile environment.

In tanks, the same rules apply as for full grown frogs. After all, even if you're not a frog predator, they still like to hide under plants and rocks when they can!

7. Frog ponds kept year-round may establish a permanent breeding pond. If you're worried about mosquito problems, drop in a few 'Blue Eyes' fish. I hear they thrive on mosquito larvae and won't hurt the frogs. These fish should be available from your local fish-carrying pet stores.

Information from allaboutfrogs.org