

Eons Ago...

Beneath red-ashen skies set aglow by a thousand erupting volcanoes, vast plains collide and mountain ranges rise. The sun is intense and the air is hot. Alternating between fierce rainstorms and long dry spells, millions of pools of water come and go. In this hostile environment only the hardiest of living things survive, and in the temporary ponds strange creatures thrive. Each has a hard shell-like body, a long forked tail, three eyes, and 140 legs. The climate turns dry and the ponds disappear, taking the weird creatures with them. Years pass, rain returns, and ponds form again. As if by some mysterious force brought on by the heat and rain and sunlight beating upon the water, the strange little creatures begin to reappear.

A long time ago, our planet looked very different from today. It had one super-size continent, called Pangaea (PAN-JEE-AH), in the middle of one giant ocean, called Panthalassa (PAN-THA-LASS-AH). There were many strange plants and animals, and the very first dinosaurs would not appear for another 100 million years. This ancient time of Earth's long history is known as the Devonian (DE-VON-EE-AN) period.

It's a Blast from the Past!

You are about to witness the birth and life of creatures that evolved during the Devonian period. Since that time — more than 350 million years ago — continents drifted apart, dinosaurs and thousands of other animal species evolved and went extinct, ice ages passed, humans emerged, entire civilizations rose and fell. Yet this amazing species managed to survive, endure and thrive.

Scientists have given them the long name, Triops longicaudatus (TRY-OPS LON-GA-AW-DA-TUS) but we call them Aquasaurs. Aquasaurs are fresh water animals that belong to the class crustacea (CRUS-TAY-SHA). They are related to shrimps, crabs and lobsters. Some people call them tadpole shrimp because of their similarity to frog tadpoles. They also resemble trilobites — extinct creatures that lived more than 500 million years ago — so they are sometimes called “living fossils.”

Aquasaurs have existed for millions and millions of years. For comparison, we humans have been on earth for about 2 million years. That's a very long span of time, but it is far less than the 350 million years that Aquasaurs have been around. How were they able to survive for so long? The answer is in their eggs.

Aquasaurs live in small temporary ponds. They lay their eggs in the bottom silt. Whenever the pond dries out, as during the hot summer season, the eggs can stay in a kind of “sleep mode” or suspended animation, called diapause (DI-A-PAWS). They can remain this way for up to 20 years! They can resist extremely hot or cold temperatures as well as very dry conditions. When rainfall returns and ponds reappear, the eggs hatch and new Aquasaurs are born, beginning their life cycle again.

Once your Aquasaur eggs have hatched, you will see them grow very quickly. With proper care Aquasaurs can double their size every day! Depending on how much food and light they are given, your Aquasaurs can grow up to two inches long and live 20 to 90 days.

Please read this guide carefully. Take good care of your new pets and they will live happy, healthy lives.

Setting Up the Habitat

VERY IMPORTANT! DO NOT SET UP HABITAT WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION!

These are what you received:

- Aquasaur habitat (tank, lid, magnifier feeding cap, base)
- One stick-on thermometer
- One pack of Aquasaur eggs
- One pack of Aquasaur food
- One plastic stirrer
- Guide to Aquasaurs (what you are reading).

This is what you need:

- Several gallon bottles of spring water (available at your local food market)
- Sheet of paper
- Pair of scissors
- Disposable cups.

1. Rinse all plastic parts in spring water. NEVER USE TAP WATER OR SOAP, as they are harmful to Aquasaurs. Soak the gravel in a cup of spring water for several hours before adding to the tank.
2. Remove the lid from the habitat.

3. Peel off the paper backing from the thermometer and stick the thermometer to the outside of the clear dry tank. Stick it on the lower right front outside of the clear tank.
4. Place the habitat on a sturdy table or shelf, where it won't be accidentally bumped or disturbed. Do not place on surface where accidental pooling of water may cause water damage. Do not place it in direct sunlight or near a heating or air conditioning vent. Once it is filled with water, it should not be moved. Never use insecticide, cleaning solvents, deodorizer, paint or other chemicals near the habitat.
5. Pour in room-temperature spring water to about one inch from the rim. Do not use water conditioner. Water temperature should be 72° to 80° F (22° to 31° C). If necessary, place an incandescent desk lamp (60 watts) about ten inches from the top in order to raise the water temperature and to provide light. It is very important that the water be between 72° and 80°.
6. Carefully drain the water from the cup containing the gravel. Pour the gravel into the habitat and spread evenly.
7. Open the pack of Aquasaur eggs. Do this over a piece of paper in case any eggs spill out. Be careful — they're tiny! Pour one-half of the eggs into the water. Do not touch the eggs. Save the other half of the eggs for another time.
8. Stir the water with a plastic stirrer. The water might get a little cloudy, but it will clear up.
9. You can add a little more spring water to wash down any eggs and debris which have clung to the sides of the habitat.
10. Replace the lid onto the tank.
11. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
12. In 7 to 10 days, you will begin to see them with the naked eye. Use the magnifying glass to spot them. They appear as orange-white dots. If no eggs have hatched after three days, check the water temperature and add the other eggs.

Care and Feeding of Your Aquasaurs

IMPORTANT! READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY FOR BEST RESULTS.

- Every day, check to see that the water temperature is 72° to 80° F (22° to 31° C). Adjust the lamp if necessary.

- For the first three days the baby Aquasaurs will feed on nutrients supplied in the egg pack, so you don't have to add any more food.
- On the fourth day it's time to start feeding. Because the baby Aquasaurs are so small, their food must be crushed in order to fit in their tiny mouths. Take one green and one brown food pellet, crush into a fine powder using a metal spoon, and drop the powder into the feeding hole. If they eat their food completely, feed them every day. Do not give them too much food though, as this will decay and spoil the water.
- Your Aquasaurs will grow rapidly. Continue to crush their food until they reach a size of one inch long. Thereafter, drop in one whole food pellet for each Aquasaur, but not more than eight pellets at a time. Watch them carefully: If they eat all the pellets in a few hours, you can give them another feeding in the evening. Make sure that they get both green and brown pellets.
- For variety, you may substitute the food pellets with very tiny bits of carrot, raw fish, freeze dried worms, or brine shrimp. But remember, don't overfeed them!
- For best results see section on **Keeping the Water Clean**.

Keeping the Water Clean:

Beginning on the eighth day, clean the water every two or three days. This will help to prevent build-up of germs and keep the water clear. Here is how to clean the water:

1. Using a disposable cup, remove about one-half of the water from the habitat and pour it into the toilet. Be extra careful not to scoop up any Aquasaurs!
2. Gently pour in room-temperature bottled spring water to about one inch from the rim. Never use tap water!
3. If the water is still cloudy, repeat steps 1 and 2 in ten minutes.
4. WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY WITH SOAP AND WARM WATER.
5. Always have enough bottled spring water and disposable cups on hand for these regular water changes.

Important: Always wash your hands thoroughly after touching the water in the habitat – it could contain a lot of harmful germs. Never drink the water!

Aquasaur Facts

- Aquasaurs first appeared at the end of the Devonian period, 350 million years ago, and were plentiful by the Triassic period, 250 million years ago.
- Aquasaurs can be found on every continent except Antarctica
- An Aquasaur egg has a thick shell that is resistant to heat, frost and dryness.
- An Aquasaur egg is called a cyst (SIST)
- A baby Aquasaur is called a nauplius (NAW-PLIEE-US)
- If you shine a flashlight on the habitat, baby Aquasaurs will swim to it.
- An Aquasaur's skeleton is outside of its body, not inside like a mammal's.
- An Aquasaur sheds its skeleton several times as it grows. This is known as molting.
- An Aquasaur has 35 to 70 pairs of legs that it uses for swimming and bringing food to its mouth.
- Aquasaurs breathe through their feet.
- An Aquasaur has three eyes: two compound eyes and one simple eye (Triops means "three eyes").
- As Aquasaurs grow, the larger ones can eat the smaller ones.

Questions and Answers

Q: How many Aquasaurs will hatch?

A: The egg pack contains about 50 Aquasaur eggs. By splitting this in half you will get about 25. However, not all the Aquasaurs will survive. This is normal. You will have one or two left that will be strong enough to grow to adults.

Q: How long will my Aquasaurs live?

A: With proper care, Aquasaurs will live 20 to 90 days.

Q: How big will my Aquasaurs get?

A: An Aquasaur can grow up to two inches in length, including its tail.

Q: How can I help my Aquasaurs grow faster?

A: Aquasaurs need four main things in order to grow: Water, light, warmth and food. Make sure that you provide these four things according to the directions in this guide booklet.

Q: Why do I need to use bottled spring water? Can't I just use tap water?

A: No. Tap water contains chlorine, which can harm Aquasaurs. Bottled spring water contains no chlorine, but still provides essential minerals.

Q: What is in the Aquasaurs food?

A: Uncle Milton's Aquasaurs Food contains the proper amounts of proteins, carbs, vitamins and minerals that your Aquasaurs need to grow and be healthy.

Q: Can I feed my Aquasaurs regular fish food?

A: Yes, you can feed them goldfish food, but only the kind that sinks to the bottom. Do not use flake food.

Q: Do I have to keep a light over the habitat on all the time?

A: No, only if it is needed to help keep the water temperature between the correct range of 72° to 80° F (22° to 31° C). If the water stays within this range without a light, then you need to provide light for the habitat from another source, such as a fluorescent desk lamp.

Q: Can I put the habitat next to a window?

A: Yes, but do not leave it in direct sunlight, since it might get too warm. Similarly, do not place it near an air conditioning vent, since it might get too cool.

Q: Do Aquasaurs bite?

A: No, they will not bite you, but avoid touching them anyway. They are delicate creatures. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after getting your hands wet.

How to Restock Your Aquasaurs Habitat

Once your Aquasaurs' life cycles have ended, you can carefully drain the water, leaving only the bottom gravel. Allow the gravel to dry out. If you have not used the other half of the egg pack, you can restock the habitat by repeating the steps in the chapter, "Setting Up the Habitat."

You can order additional Aquasaur eggs and food by mailing the enclosed form, or order by phone at 1-888-887-2626, or online at www.unclemilton.com. You are also invited to be a member of Uncle Milton's Aquasaurs Club. Details are on the back of the order form.

KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE — DO NOT DISCARD
Problems? Call us for technical difficulties. We can Help!
1-888-742-2484 or go to www.unclemilton.com

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