

AGES 6 AND UP

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Planet Frog

LIVE FROG HABITAT



Important Information Please Read!

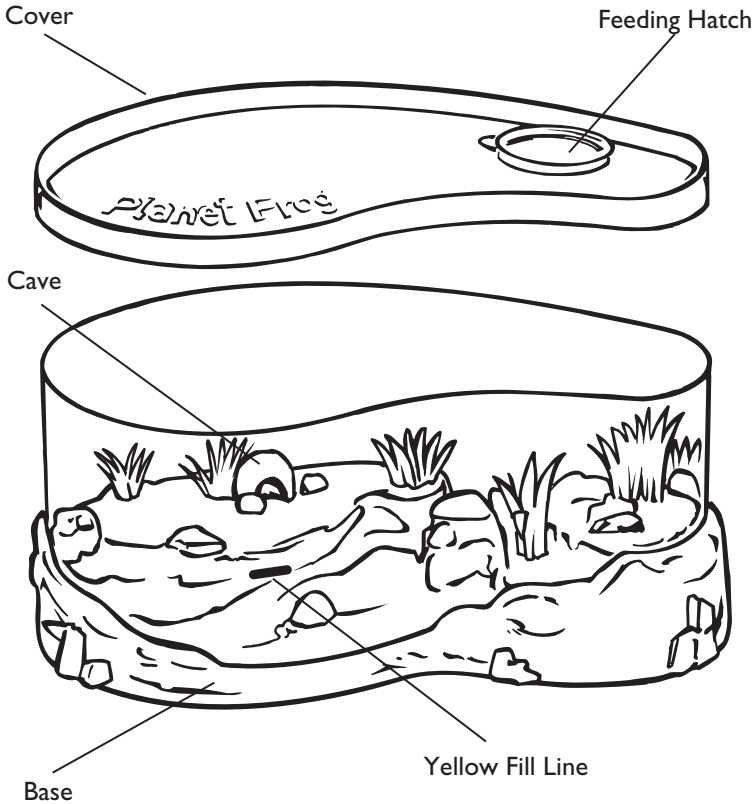
1. Tadpole food will be sent with your tadpole shipment.
2. The tadpoles we offer are captive-bred. They are raised from birth in a clean, disease-free environment by professional breeders. They are not caught from the wild. The type of tadpole that we offer is the Leopard frog tadpole. The scientific name for this species is *Rana pipiens*. Leopard frogs are common to most of North America.
3. We would like you to receive your tadpoles as quickly as possible, however it is much more important to us that you receive your tadpoles when the National Weather Service forecasts favorable weather conditions in your region. The temperature range for safe tadpole delivery is a nighttime low of 40° F to a daytime high of 80° F (4° to 32° C). We regret any potential inconvenience this delay may cause you. However, we feel it is in the best interest of both you and your tadpole.
4. Your tadpole will come in a Styrofoam box clearly marked "Live Tadpoles". We suggest that you open your package upon immediately upon receipt. If at all possible, ask your mail carrier to place your package on your porch, preferably in the shade.

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Chapter 1:

Setting Up Planet Frog



IMPORTANT:
USE ONLY BOTTLED SPRING WATER.



NEVER USE tap, mineral, distilled, carbonated, sparkling, reverse osmosis, seltzer, or well water. Make sure there's no fluoride, chlorine or chemicals of any kind in your spring water.

Sending in the Tadpole Order Form

If you want, you can order tadpoles by mail with the enclosed order form. Fill out your name and address, check your choice of one or two tadpoles and mail the order form to Frog Farm, along with the fee shown. Weather permitting, your tadpole(s) will arrive in 3 to 6 weeks. Delay in shipping may occur if you live somewhere that is too hot (above 80° F) or too cold (below 40° F). The Frog Farm ships tadpoles within the continental USA only.

The type of tadpole you will receive is a Leopard frog (*Rana pipien*). Leopard frogs live almost everywhere in North America. The Frog Farm captive-breeds it's own frogs and it makes sure that the tadpoles are clean and healthy (most other frog suppliers capture frogs from the wild). The Frog Farm nurtures the tadpoles until they are almost ready to ship. This allows the tadpoles to be stronger, so they can withstand the trip through the mail.



What You Will Need Before Your Tadpole Arrives

Have **BOTTLED SPRING WATER** on hand before your tadpole arrives. **DO NOT USE** tap water, mineral, distilled, carbonated, sparkling/seltzer water, well water, or reverse osmosis water.

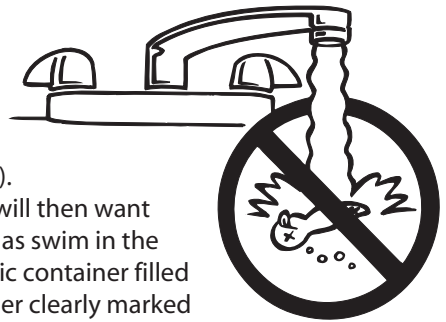
Gallon jugs of spring water can be purchased at any grocery or convenience store.

DO NOT REFRIGERATE THE WATER. IT MUST BE KEPT AT ROOM TEMPERATURE.

What to Do When Your Tadpole Arrives

When your tadpole arrives, it will look like a little fish, and live entirely in water. With your care, it will undergo an amazing metamorphosis (more about this in Chapter 3).

It will turn into a small frog, called a froglet. It will then want to explore the land area of Planet Frog as well as swim in the water. Your tadpole will arrive in a sealed plastic container filled with water and air, in a special mailing container clearly marked "Live Tadpole Enclosed." Never shake, swirl or upset the container.

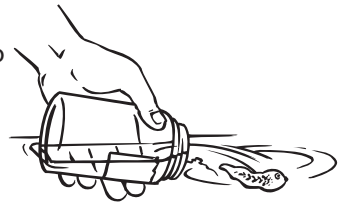
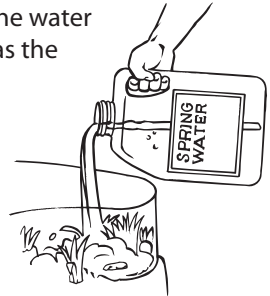


IMPORTANT: Do Not Open The Tadpole Container Yet!

Before you open the tadpole container, you must prepare the Planet Frog habitat. Do not delay! Your tadpole has been cooped up in the container for a long time and is anxious to get out. You may notice your tadpole swimming very fast in erratic patterns, upside-down or spiraling through the water. This is normal and should not be mistaken for bad health. If your tadpole is not moving it could be in “shipping shock.” This condition is not out of the ordinary, and could last up to 72 hours.

Preparing Planet Frog

- 1** Fill the water area of Planet Frog with room temperature bottled spring water to the yellow fill line, (approximately a half inch below the top edge of the shore) **DO NOT USE** tap water, mineral, distilled, carbonated, sparkling or seltzer water. These other types of water may kill your tadpole.
- 2** Float the unopened tadpole container (with the tadpole inside) on the water. Let the container stay there for 30 minutes, so the water inside the container becomes the same temperature as the water on Planet Frog. The yellow color of the water in the tadpole container is normal. It will actually help the tadpole get used to it’s new home. (The yellow color will eventually disappear over time.)
- 3** After 30 minutes, carefully open the tadpole container and lower it into the water in the habitat. Now slowly pour the entire contents of the tadpole container, including the tadpole, into the water.
- 4** Place Planet Frog in a quiet, out-of-the-way spot, away from direct sunlight or heat. The temperature in your room should be kept between 75° and 80° F. If the area your habitat is placed in is too cold, a desk lamp placed can provided the necessary heat for your tadpole. (Please note: Do not place the habitat too close to the lamp) Allow your tadpole to spend a few hours getting used to it’s new home. Any movement or disturbances to Planet Frog should be avoided.
- 5** After a few hours, add more room temperature bottled water to Planet Frog. Fill the water exactly to the yellow fill line (approximately a half inch below the top edge of the shore).
- 6** Watch your tadpole grow!



Chapter 2:

Caring for Your Tadpole

Feeding Your Tadpole

Your tadpole needs to get used to its new home before it will be interested in eating anything. So, do not feed it for at least 12 hours after it has first arrived.

As your tadpole grows, its feeding habits will change. To begin, feed your tadpole only 1/8 of a pellet 1 time per day, per tadpole. **DO NOT OVERFEED!** Overfeeding can cause organic waste to build up. (This could harm your tadpole.)

Cleaning Planet Frog (Part I)

CLEAN WATER IS ESSENTIAL to the well being of your tadpole. Waste should be removed with a kitchen baster or a large medicine dropper. Once a week, or when the water looks cloudy, remove half the water with a cup and replace it with room temperature bottled water. Fill to the yellow fill line (approximately a half inch below the top edge of the shore).

Chapter 3:

The Magic of Metamorphosis

Frogs start out as eggs, and go through several amazing changes before they become full-fledged frogs. This series of physical change is called metamorphosis. The next two to four months after your tadpole's arrival will be the most important and exciting period in its life. (Some tadpoles may take a little longer than others to develop.) Front legs will emerge. Feeding will stop. It will breathe entirely through its lungs and its head and internal organs will undergo extreme structural changes. You will notice that your tadpole's front legs are now fully developed, its tail is beginning to shrink and it is starting to come partially out of the water.

Note: If your tadpole is slow to develop, feed more often and move to a warmer location. Continue to change the water to keep it clean.

Your tadpole will soon be a frog!

Chapter 4:

Caring for Your Frog

Fragile! Handle with Care

While you may want to hold your frog now and then, too much handling may be

harmful. A frog is delicate and might be quite frightened of humans. Frogs are very good jumpers and are very slippery. Your frog may escape or be injured while being handled.

Feeding Your Frog

Once the tadpole has fully developed front and back legs, they may stop eating. The tadpole will get nourishment from its tail as the tail is absorbed into the body. In a short time the tail will totally disappear. Once your tadpole begins to venture onto the dry part of the habitat, this is when your frog will be ready for its first real meal.

In the wild, frogs eat live insects. On Planet Frog your frog will be feasting on live crickets. Crickets are available at most pet shops. The crickets should be small - no more than a 1/4 inch long - and about 1 week old. These should be the smallest crickets available, and are sometimes referred to as pinhead crickets.

Open the feeding hatch on the top of Planet Frog and drop in 1 to 2 crickets. Then close the feeding hatch. Your frog will do the rest. If there are any dead crickets in the habitat, remove them before feeding.

You may also collect your own insects to feed your frog. Sow bugs, houseflies, moths, or small earthworms will make good meals for your frog. Frogs do not like to eat beetles or ants. Do not put beetles or ants in Planet Frog. Do not feed your frog anything that is larger than half the frog's size. Also note, the frog hunts based on movement, so it will not eat dead insects.



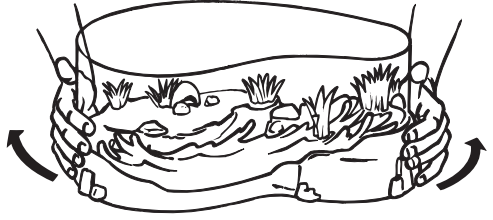
As your frog grows, it will require more food, but it is best to limit the amount of food to avoid fouling Planet Frog with mold or fungus.

Cleaning Planet Frog (Part II)

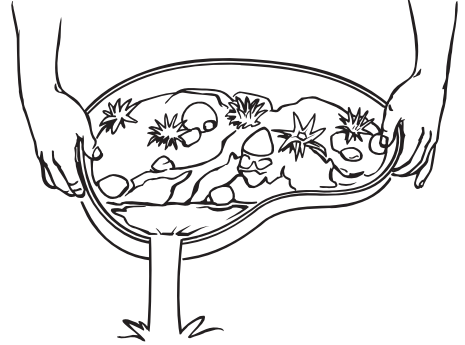
Clean water is as important to a frog as it is to a tadpole. Once or twice a week (depending on how big your frog is, or if you have more than one frog) you will need to change the water on Planet Frog. Here is how to do it:

- 1 Always keep room temperature bottled spring water on hand.
- 2 Remove the cover from Planet Frog.
- 3 Wet your hands first, then carefully pick up your frog and place it's in a bowl or a large cup with a half inch of water in it. Do not under any circumstances

have any soap or chemicals on your hands.
Cover the bowl or cup to keep your frog from getting out.
DO NOT USE A BOWL OR CUP WITH AN AIRTIGHT LID.
Your frog still needs to breathe.



- 4 Pour the old water from Planet Frog into the sink and rinse the entire habitat with warm tap water.
DO NOT USE ANY SOAP OR OTHER CLEANERS. (Frogs have sensitive skin. The chemicals in soap and other cleaning products may harm your frog.)
Make sure to clean off all waste and excess food.



- 5 Fill Planet Frog with clean, room temperature, bottled water. Fill to the yellow fill line (approximately a half inch below the top edge of the shore).

Never use any cleaning products, air fresheners, insecticides, etc. on or near Planet Frog. These products can easily contaminate Planet Frog.

Chapter 5:

The Leopard frog

Your frog is called a Leopard frog because of the unique leopard-like pattern on the skin. It is one of the most common type of frog in North America. Leopard frogs have a low call that sounds a lot like snoring. In the wild, Leopard frogs live near clear freshwater springs in lightly wooded areas, where they enjoy sunning themselves. They will also travel long distances from their pond. Leopard frogs are quite active after sunset in warm, wet weather. When approached, they first remain motionless. If threatened, they will jump into the water and try to hide among plants or rocks, or by digging into the bottom of the pond.

The Leopard frog has markings that help it hide in the wild. This form of defense is called camouflage. The upper part of the frog is darker and helps the frog blend in with the color of the ground. The underside of the frog is pale and blends in with the sky when seen from below in the pond. Camouflage is a way that many animals protect themselves from predators. Do not forget: A frog's skin is fragile and is easily damaged

if the frog is handled improperly. If you must handle your frog, do so carefully, and only with wet hands!

If you have two frogs, they will not try to mate. Planet Frog does not provide the correct environment for mating. In the wild, Leopard frogs are ready to mate when they are 2 to 4 years old. The males will start to call the females from areas around the water. The males might also float on the surface of the water scouting for females. During this time, which is usually in the spring, males are very territorial, meaning they defend their area against other males. A female Leopard frog will lay up to 1,000 to 2,000 tiny black eggs. No further care is given to the eggs by either parent. Depending upon the water temperature, the eggs will hatch in approximately seven days and a new life cycle begins.

Male Leopard frogs may grow to be about three inches long. Females may be a bit larger. Under proper conditions a Leopard frog can live up to five years.

Frogs can sit almost entirely underwater and still be able to see above the surface. A frog's eyes are large and are placed on top of the head. When a frog swims underwater, a clear inner eyelid closes and protects the eye while still allowing the frog to see, like a diving mask. The placement of the eyes allows the frog to do what it does best - sit in the water and wait until the next meal comes by!

A frog cannot see food that is not moving. If a bug were placed directly in front of a frog's nose and it did not move, the frog would not even know it is there. Once the bug moves, it is lunch.

Some frogs even have teeth. The common frogs have one set of very tiny teeth in their upper jaw. The purpose of the frog's teeth is to grip food, not to tear or chew food.

Some frogs have long, sticky tongues that they use to catch bugs. When a frog swallows a bug, the eyeballs close and move down into the head. The eyeballs actually help push the frog's meal down the throat!

A frog's nose consists of two nostrils that are so tiny they can hardly be seen at all! A frog's ears are called tympanum, which means drum. It's ears are actually connected to the lungs. Scientists think that this allows frogs to call in loud, low voices without hurting their own ears.



Frogs have air sacs that can fill with air and create a terrific "ribbit!" A frog forces air into the sac, over the vocal chords—that is when you here the "ribbit"—and back into the lungs. While a frog is doing all this, it never even opens it's mouth! It is thought that the male frog uses

his voice to attract female frogs during mating season or to announce the arrival of a frog that is in another's territory.

A Few Fascinating Facts about Frogs

- ✎ Frogs are amphibious. That means they spend part of their time in the water and part on land.
- ✎ There are nearly 4,000 species, or kinds, of frogs and toads. Toads are all frogs, but not all frogs are toads. Generally, the term "frog" is used for those species that live in moist areas. The term "toad" is used for species that live on dry land. Frogs have powerful hind legs and webbed feet that are great for jumping and swimming, whereas toads have stubby bodies with short hind legs that are better for walking than leaping. Frogs lay their eggs in clusters, but toads lay their eggs in long strands.
- ✎ A frog's skin is smooth and slimy, while a toad's skin is rough with warts. Frogs have bulging eyes, while toads have eyes that are set into their head.
- ✎ Some frogs, like the Poison Dart frog, are dangerous, but Leopard frogs are harmless.
- ✎ A frog's skeleton is designed to withstand the stresses of jumping. However, many frogs walk more often than they jump.
- ✎ A group of frogs is called neither a flock, a herd nor a school. It's called an army of frogs.

Types of frogs

- ✎ **The World's Largest Frog**
The largest frog, the Goliath frog of Cameroon in West Africa, can be over 30 inches in length and weigh more than seven pounds!
- ✎ **The World's Smallest Frog**
The smallest known frog is the Poison Arrow frog of Cuba. These frogs never grow larger than a half inch long!

👉 **Poison Arrow frog**

The Poison Arrow frog of South America is brightly colored. It has a liquid on its skin that can stun other animals. This is the frog's defense against predators.

👉 **Red-Eyed Tree frog**

The Red-Eyed Tree frog lives in the rain forests of Central America. Its vibrant skin colors help it to hide among the colorful leaves and flowers. Its eyes are red and its toes are orange. The Red-Eyed Tree frog has become a symbol of the Earth's ecology. It is often pictured on post cards, greeting cards and books.

👉 **Fire Bellied toad**

The Fire Bellied toads of eastern Asia have brilliant green skin with black spots. Their undersides are orange-red, giving them their name.

👉 **Flying frog**

The Flying frog of Borneo can launch itself up into the air, spread its feet and use the webbing between its toes as a parachute to make a safe landing.

👉 **Glass frog**

The Glass frog of Central America has transparent skin. If you look closely, you can see the frog's internal organs!

👉 **Argentine Horned frog**

The Argentine Horned frog can — and will — mistake a human's fingers for food. It is able to inflict painful wounds.

Endangered species

Some types of frogs are in danger of disappearing forever from the face of the earth! Scientists point to many possible causes, including shrinking natural habitats due to expansion of human populations, depletion of the rain forest and the ozone layer, global warming, and pollution of the air, land and water.

Some types of frogs that are in danger of becoming extinct (or have already gone extinct) are the Goliath frog, the Gastric Brooding frog, the Monteverde Golden toad of Costa Rica, and the Western toad (or Boreal toad) of western North America.

Why Frogs Are Good for the Environment

Frogs eat lots of insects, providing a natural way to control insect populations. Frogs also make excellent environmental indicators. Frogs are very sensitive to changes in the environment. The presence of unhealthy frogs is an early warning that there may be something wrong with the environment in which they are living. The population of many frog species is declining rapidly around the world. This tells us something about our planet's environments.

Chapter 6:

What to Do If You Can No Longer Care for Your Frog

If you are no longer able to care for your frog, please do not release it outside. Frogs that have been cared for in captivity all of their lives have not really learned to survive in the wild. They are not as aggressive as wild frogs when seeking food and they have never learned to defend themselves. Your frog would probably not live long in the wild.

Instead of releasing your frog in the wild, it would be much better to give your frog to a friend who is willing to take care of it, or donate it to a local school that would like to adopt it. You can even give it to your local pet store so they can find someone else to take care of it.

Chapter 7:

Questions and Answers about Planet Frog

Q: Does the Frog Farm ship tadpoles year-round?

A: Yes. Normally, it takes about 4 to 6 weeks to receive your tadpole(s). However, there may be a delay in shipping if the temperature in your area is too hot (above 80° F) or too cold (below 40° F). It is best to send the tadpole order form any time except during very hot or very cold seasons.

Q: How many frogs can live on Planet Frog?

A: Planet Frog is designed to safely and comfortably support no more than two adult Leopard frogs. If you get another type of frog from your local pet store, Planet Frog may only have space for one frog. Remember not to get a frog that is too big.

Q: Will two Leopard frogs breed on Planet Frog?

A: No. Leopard frogs do not breed until they are three years old. When they do breed in the wild, they require particular environmental cues that do not exist on Planet Frog.

Q: How large will a Leopard frog grow?

A: On Planet Frog, your froglet will remain about an inch long for up to a year. It can eventually grow to about three inches.

Q: Is there enough space on Planet Frog for my frogs? Is there enough air?

A: Yes, to both questions. Planet Frog was designed with the health and well-being of Leopard frogs in mind. Amphibian experts helped design Planet Frog so that there is sufficient space, air and water to support two captive-bred adult Leopard frogs.

Q: What should I feed my tadpole?

A: Leopard frog tadpoles require a specially formulated tadpole food. This food is included with your tadpole. Please see page 6 for tadpole feeding instructions.

Q: What should I feed my froglet or adult frog?

A: Frogs will eat only live insects (except beetles and ants). It is best to feed your frog crickets. Crickets are available at almost any pet store. You may also feed your frog flies, worms or moths. See chapter 4 for proper feeding instructions.

Q: Can I put any kind of frog on Planet Frog?

A: Not just any type of frog. Many kinds of frogs require specific living conditions. Planet Frog was designed for the Leopard frog. If you want to have a different kind of frog, please ask your local pet store for advice. (See chapter 1.)

Q: How long will the frog live on Planet Frog?

A: Captive-bred Leopard frogs can live up to five years if given proper care and feeding. The life span of other types of frogs will vary.

Q: If I order a second tadpole, can I place it on Planet Frog with an adult frog?

A: No. Unfortunately, an adult frog may view a tadpole, or even a froglet, as food. All tadpoles should be ordered at the same time.

Q: How can I tell a male frog from a female frog?

A: Generally, female frogs are slightly larger than male frogs. Otherwise, it is difficult to tell them apart.

Q: Why does the frog spend so much time in the water?

A: Frogs are amphibious creatures. They spend part of their time in the water, absorbing moisture through their skin, and part of the time on dry land feeding or resting. Leopard frogs often sit in the water for long periods of time.

Q: Why won't my froglet eat his crickets?

A: Make sure the crickets are small enough (about 1/4 inch long) and introduce one cricket at a time. Be patient, your froglet may take a week before he begins to eat the crickets.

Q: I ran out of tadpole food, what should I do?

A: Go to your local pet store and purchase a low-protein goldfish food.

Chapter 8

Further reading

If you want to learn more about frogs, check out your school's library or local public library. If you have access to a computer, the Internet is another great place to find information.

Suggested books about frogs:

Fantastic Frogs by Jerry G. Walls (TFN Publications, 1995)

Frogs & Toads by Jane Dallinger and Sylvia A. Johnson
(Lerner Publications Company, 1972/1982)

Frogs and Toads by Steve Parker (Sierra Club Books for Children, 1992)

Frogs and Toads of the World by Chris Mattison (Facts on File Publications, 1987)

Tadpoles by Elaine Pascoe, (Blackbirch Press, Inc., 1997)



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