



Red-Eyed Tree Frogs

Agalychnis callidryas

INTERMEDIATE · 2-3 IN ADULT · 5-8 YR LIFESPAN · NOCTURNAL · CENTRAL AMERICA

Nothing says 'rainforest' like this frog. By day it's a green almond folded flat under a leaf; after dark the famous red eyes open and one of the hobby's great display animals clocks in. From Central America's tropical and cloud forests, it's an intermediate keep: not mean, just exacting about humidity, airflow and clean water. This is a look-don't-touch species, and honest keepers treat it that way.

AT A GLANCE	
Difficulty	Intermediate
Adult size	2-3 in
Lifespan	5-8 years
Ambient temp	75-82 °F
Basking spot	80-84 °F
Night drop	68-72 °F
Humidity	60-80%
UVB	Low output, beneficial
Diet	Insects every 2-3 days



The frog on every rainforest poster is a regular sight on NARBC show tables. Those red eyes are a startle defense, not decoration.

Photo: Roger A. Morales-Flores / iNaturalist · CC BY

01

The Look-Don't-Touch Frog

Fame aside, the honest deal is simple: this is a display animal. Amphibian skin is permeable and absorbs whatever it touches, so handle only when you must, with clean, wet, soap-free hands. By day they sleep folded flat under leaves like green seed pods; the show starts after lights-out. The intermediate label is about discipline with humidity and water, not about a difficult animal.

02

Housing by Life Stage

An arboreal frog needs height, so turn the enclosure on its end: a single adult needs 18×18×24 at minimum, 24×24×36 preferred, and froglets can start in 12×12×18. Vertical space only counts if it's furnished. Layer climbing branches and broad-leaved plants they can sleep under. Glass with a screen top holds humidity while still breathing. Groups of similar-sized frogs work in roomy setups; keep them same-sex unless you want eggs on every leaf.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	12×12×18	18×18×24	Delicate froglets; keep humidity high, 80-100%.
Juvenile	18×18×24	18×18×24	Live plants are critical: cover, perches, drinking surfaces.
Subadult	18×18×24	24×18×36	Groups possible; keep them same-sex to avoid breeding.
Adult	18×18×24	24×24×36	Bioactive strongly recommended; a fog or mist system is ideal.

Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Sizes are W×D×H in inches; for this climber, the last number is the one that counts.

03

Heat & Light

Run the air column at 75–82 °F with a small basking zone of 80–84 °F up top, and let nights fall to 68–72 °F, a natural drop rather than a problem to fix. Heat from above with a low-wattage source the frog can't touch; wet skin burns fast on hot glass. Low-output UVB is beneficial rather than mandatory, and it keeps live plants earning their keep. Overheating kills quicker than a cool night ever will.

04

Humidity & Water

Ambient humidity lives at 60–80%; evening misting should push it toward 80–100% overnight, then let it dry back down. That cycle beats constant saturation, which breeds bacteria. Delicate froglets stay at the high end full-time. Keep a shallow dish of clean water in reach. **Dechlorinate every drop (dish, misting, plant watering), because chlorine and chloramine kill through permeable skin.** No soaps or chemicals near the enclosure; residue on glass or hands is poison to a frog.

05

Substrate & Planting

Bioactive is strongly recommended, and this species is the textbook case for it: drainage layer, tropical soil mix, leaf litter and springtails make a self-cleaning cloud forest. Live plants aren't decor here; broad-leaved pothos, philodendron and bromeliads are where the frogs sleep, drink and hide. Skip gravel and anything a lunging frog could swallow. Enrichment for an arboreal ambusher is architecture: vary the branches, keep part of the canopy dim.

06

Feeding

A night-hunting insect specialist: crickets are the staple, flies and moths the variety, offered every 2–3 days after dark. Gut-load feeders, then dust. Plain calcium, no D3 or phosphorus, goes on most feedings; without UVB, a D3 calcium replaces it twice a week, with a D3-free multivitamin twice a month. Keep prey no bigger than the space between the eyes, and watch the body line: sleek, not skeletal and not a bowling pin. Remove uneaten crickets by morning; loose ones chew on sleeping frogs.

07

Health Red Flags

Amphibians hide illness late, so read the small signs. A frog sitting exposed on the floor by day, not asleep under a leaf, is telling you something. Reddened belly or thigh skin is urgent: 'red-leg' septicemia moves fast. Add cloudy eyes, persistent darkening, a week of refused food, bloat, or visible thinness. Any of these: check water and temps the same day and call an amphibian-savvy exotics vet. A frog this small can't afford a wait-and-see week.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual - when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.