



Mandarin and Emperor Newts (*Tylotriton* sp.)

A Striking Emperor of Newts

Other common names for these newts can include the Mandarin newt, Emperor newt, knobby newts, or crocodile newts. Mandarin newts are a large, stocky newt species with a granular skin ranging from black to dark brown. They have prominent, raised yellowish, orange, to orangish-yellow paratoid glands, vertebral dorsal ridge, and two parallel rows of longitudinal poison glands that the newt will secrete toxins from if roughly handled or ingested. The head, limbs, and tail also have a yellow-orange coloration as well. There are roughly 14 species in this genus of newts. However, the Emperor Newt (*Tylotriton shanjing*) and Himalayan Crocodile Newt (*Tylotriton verrucosus*) are perhaps the most commonly seen and kept in the pet trade.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata/Urodela

Suborder: Salamandroidea

Family: Salamandridae

Genus: *Tylotriton*

Species: *Tylotriton* sp.*

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the correct care in captivity, Mandarin and emperor newts can reach up to 15 to 20 years.

Distribution and Habitat

Depending on the range of the precise species, these newts are indigenous to the mountain vernal ponds and other temporary wetlands and surrounding forests of China (*T. shanjing*), India, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Near Threatened (NT).

Experience Level Required

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Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Mandarin and emperor newts are a large species of newt that average between 4 and 8 inches in size.

Housing and Enclosure

Mandarin newts are a primarily terrestrial species of newt through most of the year, although they will return to their vernal breeding ponds during the spring and summer breeding season. They may be maintained in a 10 to 20 gallon moisten terrestrial or semi aquatic terrarium or setup. Ensure that any enclosure that is used is secure and escape proof, and adequately ventilated. Substrates that can be used to house these species can include 3 to 4 inches of moistened, but not overly wet sphagnum or peat moss, vermiculite, chemical and pesticide free top soil or potting soil, coconut fibers, or combinations of these substrates. Adequate hiding opportunities should also be provided, and can include rock, bark, or cork bark hides, slabs, or other furnishings in the enclosure. They are not strong climbers, and thus will not need an overly abundant supply of arboreal furnishings. Either a large, shallow water dish or semi aquatic setup with adequate filtration to maintain cleanliness and access to a moist, terrestrial area of the enclosure can also be provided.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

These newts prefer and require seasonally cool temperatures relatively. They can be maintained from 58 to 62 degrees F during the spring, and about 70 to 78 degrees during the summer, with access to day/night and seasonal photoperiods. As with most amphibians, caution should also be used in not drastically exceeding these temperatures, which can overheat amphibians especially. These newts do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. They can, however, be susceptible to health and husbandry related issues if water temperatures are too cold or too warm for these unusual amphibians. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; In the wild, Mandarin newts will consume a variety of terrestrial and aquatic foods. Worms, arachnids, isopods, insects, and other invertebrates are all readily eaten. In captivity, these robust newts are easily fed, and can readily be given chopped nightcrawlers, worms, isopods, feeder crickets, roaches, waxworms, and mealworms at least two to three times weekly, with this being their recommended feeding frequency. Any feeder insects should also be gut loaded and dusted with additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplements as well prior to feeding to ensure optimal nutrition and health. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

As with most amphibians, Mandarin newts can be fragile and delicate animals. Handling should be limited or kept to a minimum whenever possible. These large newts can be handled, but in doing so, hands should be wet or moistened, and any hand chemicals not worn. Although these newts can secrete a fairly potent toxin from their prominent glands if they are roughly handled or ingested, these newts can still be safe if handled gently, and provided simple and common sense handling and sanitary measures are followed.

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****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

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