



## Mantella Frogs *Family Mantellidae*

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- Mantellas are found only on the island of Madagascar off of Africa.
- Mantellas display what is known as brightly colored aposematic coloration that warns predators of their potential toxicity.
- Depending on the species, they are brightly colored reds, oranges, golds, yellows, blues, and greens.
- There are over 100 species of mantella frogs.
- If provided the proper care, mantella frogs can attain longevity of 10-15 years or more.

### **Size**

Size varies depending on the species, with mantella frogs ranging from less than ½” to 2”.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. Housing for mantellas should be naturalistic and mimic their natural environment as much as possible. Live plants should be used whenever possible to help maintain oxygen and humidity levels inside the vivarium. A 10 to 30 gallon planted glass terrarium, vivarium, or even custom made enclosure with ample hiding and climbing areas should be provided. Humidity should fall between 80-100%, but provide minimal ventilation. Maintain most mantellas at temperatures from 70-80 degrees F, rarely above or below these temperature ranges.

Many commercially available hydrometers can monitor humidity levels inside the enclosure. Mantella enclosures can be maintained at around room temperature or sometimes with under tank heating pads in some cases. Covering 80-90% of the enclosure or vivarium with a sheet of glass can achieve the desired humidity levels.

Also provide a “false bottom” constructed of quartz gravel, PVC, or charcoal to enable proper drainage from the vivarium. Substrates that are acceptable should retain humidity well and can include peat moss, fir bark, and sphagnum moss. Mantellas also benefit from misting, and should be misted every 1 to 3 days. Many commercially available automatic and manual homemade misting systems are available for use. Lighting is not required for mantellas, but can improve aesthetics and fluorescent bulbs can help mimic a 12 hour light cycle to promote optimal live plant growth by using full spectrum terrarium or aquarium bulbs.

### **Feeding/Diet**

In the wild, mantellas are almost entirely insectivorous, feeding on live, moving insects, arthropods, and other invertebrates. In captivity, it is recommended that they be provided cultured flightless fruit flies, springtails, isopods, or pinhead crickets. Many of these food items may need supplementation with calcium and other multi vitamins, which are commonly available through many commercial and retail outlets. Most mantellas can be fed anywhere from 15-40 insects every other day, but this depends on the age and size of the frog and feeder insects.

### **Handling**

Mantellas are small and fragile amphibians, and handling them should thus be reduced or eliminated as much as possible. In most cases, there is very little to no risk of ingesting toxic secretions from captive bred/born mantellas, most of which derive their toxins from invertebrates consumed in the wild.

\*\*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\*\*