

## ----- Feeding

A Firebelly Toad's diet usually consists of what ever insect they can catch & swallow. Usually they will eat crickets, moths, flies, beetles & many types of worms. They can go up to 5 days without eating, but they have been known to prey upon their own kind as a last resort. Feed your toad with live food, toads need to see movement in order to know what to eat. Do not feed too large of prey. The largest prey should be no bigger than twice the size of the largest part of the toad you are feeding. Make sure you are present as live prey can & will fight back causing an injury to your pet. Pets stores carry live crickets & worms for amphibians & reptiles & are easy to find. Fire-bellied toads need to be fed 2-3 times a week. At each feed session, each toad requires 4-8 medium sized insects.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.



## check-list ✓

### Your pet Firebelly Toad requires...

- Aquarium or Vivarium of appropriate size
- Under-tank heater or 'heated rock' (optional)
- Bathing dish or bowl (big enough for the toad)
- UVB Light (maintains plants & humidity)
- Rocks, moss & Ferns (for hiding spots)
- Clean Gloves & Holding box (during cleaning)
- Misting bottle (simple plant sprayer for water)
- Thermometer
- Sealable box for keeping 'live' food (insects)



## Firebelly Toads

- Size: 2.5 cm to 5.5 cm in length (1.5 inches or 4 cm is typical)
- Life Span: 14 - 20 years on average - well kept specimens have reached over 30



## ----- Temperament

The Fire-bellied Toads is a group comprising eight species of small toads belonging to the genus Bombina. They are active & very entertaining to watch during feeding. The mating call of the male sounds like a dog's bark & will be very faint to hear. "Fire-bellied" is derived from the brightly coloured red- or yellow-and-black patterns on the toads' belly regions, which act as a warning to predators of the toads' reputedly foul taste & poisonous effect. The other parts of the toads' skins are green or dark brown. Color can change slightly depending on lighting or temperature. If confronted by a predator, this toad commonly arches its back, raising its front & back legs to display the coloration of its toxic under side.

**Unfortunately, these little guys are a case of "Look, but don't touch!"** It is risky to house any type of these toads with other species of toad because of their toxins. On some, there is a spot of color, such as green or brown, where the gland is located. **Their oils are toxic & can cause a rash (or worse) in humans.** It is extremely important that any water in the habitat is changed every few days or is filtered as the toxin will build up. They are not meant to be touched & toads in general are sensitive to being handled. Picking them up too much can kill them. Only handle the toad when cleaning the tank. **The salts on our skin will hurt your toad & can be fatal.** Use latex gloves to take it out & put it in a moist container during tank cleaning.

Toads in the wild are facing population declines & extinction largely as a result of human activities. You should try to buy toads that you are sure are captive bred locally & tested to be free of disease. The declining numbers is partly caused by Chytrid fungus introduced into wild populations from pet specimens.

## Housing



Firebelly Toad's bright colors, interesting nature, & easy care make them a good pet choice!

Firebelly Toads do not need much room. A 10 gallon fish tank is fine, to start. You ideally want a tall tank or terrarium that you can mimic the toad's natural environment with branches for the toad to climb & leafy areas to hide under. Toad environments need tight doors or lids to maintain security & moisture.

Your toad environment should include:

- **Substrate:** gravel (should be smooth), cypress mulch, or soil with peat/vermiculite or indoor/outdoor carpeting. The substrate can be covered with moss or cork bark. Try for a 40% water, 60% land scenario.
- **Heating:** The temperature in your toads enclosure should be between 70 - 80 Fahrenheit. At night the temperature can drop as low as 64. An under tank heater can be used as the only source of heat by putting it on half the tank. A combination of under tank heating &/or a low wattage basking light works well to maintain humidity.
- **Decoration:** Branches, vines, rocks, etc are good things to have in your enclosure to give your Toad something to climb on. Opportunity for climbing is very important, make sure to provide a variety of branches & live or artificial plants. Live plants to consider include philodendrons or sturdy ferns.
- **Water:** provide a large water dish with dechlorinated water. The tank should be misted with dechlorinated water daily to maintain humidity & water the live plants.

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Toad environments can be as complex as you want to make them. Ideally, the tank should be a pond landscape. Your tank can include soil & live ferns or grasses, stones & branches. Keeping toads is a great way for kids to learn about ecosystems. You want to include a large shallow dish for the toads to soak in & to keep their tank environment moist. The dish may be set into a bedding material or soil. You want to have around 35-40% of the tank to be water. Place the water bowl at one end of the tank & build up your soil or substrate around it, leaving land at the other end. Buy a ten gallon tank for two toads, a 15 gallon tank for three to five toads. Also make sure your tank has a tight fitting lid as they manage escape from impossible places & you want to keep the moisture in their tank. Use a substrate (the stuff that lines the bottom of the tank) such as smooth gravel, potting soil, moss, cedar bark, coconut bark or small pebbles.

Make sure the water in the dish is dechlorinated by leaving a container of water out at least 24 hours. Chlorine in tap water can kill toads & must be left to evaporate (do NOT skip this step in their care). A small water dish is standard, as these toads like to bathe or soak in water (they can breathe & drink through their skin!) Mist them occasionally along with the plants. You are trying to create an environment that is relatively warm & moist. The toads will benefit from having live plants in their terrarium. Pothos are an excellent choice for firebelly toad terrariums. Pothos can be left in pots, grown in jars of water or planted directly into soil on the bottom of the terrarium. The plants will provide the toads with places to perch & help maintain high humidity. Firebelly Toads naturally live in a moist environment & like humidity no lower than 60%. You can use a spray bottle to spray the tank & keep humidity up. Automatic humidifiers can be used as well. A small heater can be placed under the terrarium to insure that the temperature stays above 74 degrees Fahrenheit. A florescent light can be used during the day. UVA/UVB lighting is not needed although it doesn't hurt to use it anyway (no more than 10 hours a day). You should thoroughly clean the enclosure once a week to every ten days. Takiing every thing out & scrubbing it under hot water(no soap). Place the toads in a small container at this time. The tank itself will need to be cleaned too (hot water, no soap).

**Handling is stressful & unhealthy for amphibians, as the chemicals in human skin can be detrimental to them. When handling is necessary, clean gloves should be worn.**



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