ORIENTAL FIRE BELLIED TOAD (BOMBINA ORIENTALIS)

BASIC CARE SHEET

INTRODUCTION

Oriental fire bellied toads make excellent starter amphibians as the care for them is relatively easy. They are also very active in the day time, i could watch mine for hours on end. I have an adult colony that bred last year (2012) it was an amazing experience!

FBTs originate from China, Korea and Siberia and live in rice paddies and humid mountain and forest areas with slow flowing streams.

They are actually in the frog family rather than toad but their bumpy skin earned the "toad" in their common name.

The average life span of an fbt in captivity is 10-15 years.

Adults can grow up to 5cm(2 inches) so a fairly small amphibian to keep which is great as they prefer to live in small groups rather than alone. They can often be seen hanging out together on rocks and logs. Never house anything other than FBTs together in one enclosure as they secrete toxins from gland behind their heads that can be deadly to other animals and also irritate skin, so wash your hands thoroughly after cleaning the enclosure.

TEMPERATURE for FBTs is between 23-25°C with a slight drop at night time. This means in the average home no additional heating is required. I have personally found that only in extreme cold weather i have had to use a heat mat to keep the temperatures up. NEVER use heat bulbs to heat any amphibian as this dries your enclosure and therefore your amphibian.

U.V LIGHTING is not necessary for FBTs BUT personally i do use a low u.v canopy lighting system as i use live plants in my enclosures, it keeps the plants healthy. A study in America suggested there was no benefit to the actual frog by using u.v and also no damage by doing so. So this is optional.

HOUSING a 45x45x45cm exo terra is minimum size to house a group of 3-6 frogs. Whatever type of glass enclosure you use make sure it has a secure lid as FBTs are brilliant escape artists and can slip through tiny gaps.

There are 2 ways to set up your vivarium. The main aspect of it must be half water half land.
set up idea 1

This is my adult set up which is one of the ways. It was quite simple a quick guide is to cover the bottom of the viv with quite large aquarium gravel. Use various large stones, bog wood and aquarium decor to build up your 50% land area. Live or sphagnum moss adds a nice natural look to stones and rocks. Be as creative as you like :-) Another idea to create land areas is to use a large ice cream tub or similar, poke small holes in the bottom. Add a thin layer of hydro leca ( available really cheaply in garden centres) for drainage then a layer of hydro fleece or net curtain to create a barrier between drainage and substrate, fill to the top with eco earth or similar. It creates a perfect pot to plant live plants, spider plants work well as they like humid areas. Place this in the vivarium with a bogwood or stone ramp it looks great :-) Then just add 5-15 cm of de-chlorinated water. A small filter can be used to help keep the water cleaner for longer. Aquatic plants also make an attractive addition.

Set up idea 2

Another way to set up the vivarium is to use a sunken swimming pool by using a large plastic tub. Place it in the vivarium then to the other side add a layer of hydro leca about an inch deep, then fill up to the top of the tub with eco earth or similar. Add small stones, plants, fake or live and any decor you fancy to the land area to create hiding places for your frogs. Make sure you add stones or bogwood to your water pool so they can relax in the water area without having to swim and also helps them to get in and out of the water. Again live or sphagnum moss is good decor for your land area.

FEEDING  Adult FBTs can manage small locusts medium crickets and chopped earth worms, tropical woodlice or even small wild woodlice make a tasty snack. Younger toadlets are best with smaller crickets and tiny pieces of chopped earth worms.

SEXING  out of breeding season is quite difficult. An adult male will "croak" in breeding season to attract his lady friends which is the easiest way to tell the sexes apart. Males tend to be more "buff" than females with chunkier arms, in breeding season they develop little nuptual pads on their elbows.

That concludes my basic care guide to oriental fire bellied toads. They are amazing little animals with loads of character. Hopping around investigating the enviroment you have created for them. I have literally sat and watched mine for hours!! I would recommend them to any amphibian fan.

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