



*Photo Credit: Viva Natura

Mexican Leaf Frog *(Pachymedusa dacnicolor)*

Green and Gold Giants

Also known as the Mexican Giant Leaf Frog, the Mexican Leaf Frog is a monotypic, or single species within its genus of large, chubby, smooth skinned treefrog with enlarged toe pads characteristic of most tree frogs. Indigenous to the southern Sonoran region along the western pacific coast of Mexico, this species is a large, docile treefrog may occasionally be found near lights and window sills at night and during their crepuscular habits seeking insects and other invertebrates to eat. This species typically ranges in overall dorsal color from bright to dark green or olive-green with variable amounts of white to yellowish spots or flecks, and a white ventral or underside, and yellowish to orangish or reddish-orange digits. This species also has noticeable silver to golden-irises as well. As with most other frog species, they will also call and vocalize during certain times of the year (such as after rainy or wet seasons), to signal territory or as a self-defense to startle predators. During the day, they spend most of their time in dark, cool, and moist leaves, tree cavities or rock crevices, and will secrete waxy, mucous-like skin secretions to help maintain their moisture and prevent desiccation. This species is also unique among many treefrogs in that their eggs are laid in clumps on overhanging vegetation, and the tadpoles will fall into the water upon hatching! For those looking for a unique pet frog that is out of the ordinary, and tolerates handling relatively well, the Mexican Leaf Frog may indeed be a species for you!

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Neobatrachia

Family: Hylidae

Genus: Pachymedusa

Species: *Machymedusa dacnicolor**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

Although captive and wild longevity for this species is currently uncertain, The Mexican leaf frog has the potential to reach at least 10 to 15 years or more under proper care in captivity.

Distribution and Habitat

Enclosure System: Primarily Moist-Arboreal. The Mexican leaf treefrog is a medium sized to large, arboreal treefrog species indigenous to the western coastal regions of Mexico, from southern portions of Sonora, through to southern Oaxaca, Mexico. Within this range, these treefrogs inhabit the dry, tropical to sub-tropical forests and woodlands, as well as occasionally near residential areas of human habitation, where they seek refuge amongst large leaves, rock or tree cavities and crevices, logs, rocks, and other forest vegetation and debris. They are most often found in these habitats with intermittent rivers, freshwater marshes, ponds, reservoirs, or other drainage ditches or other wetlands or bodies of water nearby for breeding and reproduction.

Origin/History

Agalychnis dacnicolor (Cope, 1864).

Little is known about the history of Mexican leaf frogs in the pet trade, although they have probably been present for many decades since at least the 1960's. They were reported in Miami-Dade County in Florida in 1964 through intentional release from an animal dealer (King and Krakauer, 1966).

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Moderate/Intermediate.

Size

Adult Mexican leaf frogs are large species of treefrogs that typically reach from 3 ½ to 4 ½ inches as adults, with the sexes being slightly dimorphic in size, with females being slightly larger.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 15 to 20 gallon tall glass aquarium or terrarium is suitable for a single Mexican leaf frog. Provide several horizontal perches for the frog to climb and rest on. Provide additional live or artificial foliage, logs, cork bark, or other cage furnishings for added security and aesthetic appeal. Substrates that retain some moisture and humidity should be used such as paper towels, or sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, or potting soil for more naturalistic enclosures. Substrate should be pesticide free. Provide a large, shallow water dish in the enclosure and change at least 2 to 3 times weekly. Spot clean daily.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Mexican leaf frogs have fairly simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and 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. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). Maintain these frogs at higher humidity between 60 and 80%, and be sure to mist their enclosure at least once daily. Maintain these frogs at ambient temperatures of between 65 and 80 degrees. These frogs can tolerate relatively higher basking temperatures than many other amphibians at up to 90 degrees F, although temperatures and thermal gradients should still be regulated and monitored to prevent overheating. A 12 to 14 hour light cycle can also be provided if overhead lighting is used. 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; In the wild, Mexican leaf frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. They will occasionally catch and consume other smaller vertebrates as well. In captivity, feed these frogs a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Mexican leaf frogs also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. 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

Unlike many amphibians, Mexican leaf frogs will tolerate some level of careful but deliberate handling and can often become fairly accustomed to being handled. All amphibians breathe and respire through their skin, as well as absorb water through this means. It is therefore important to avoid wearing any chemicals or lotions on your hands, which can be potentially harmful or even fatal to amphibians. It is also important to wash or rinse hands thoroughly, and ensure they are adequately moistened before and after handling any amphibians in order to prevent them from drying out.

****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:

Eric.S.Roscoe@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. We cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety.

***Copyright, 2023**