

Feeding your frogs

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Feeding the frogs: Frogs eat wingless fruit flies. Actually fish love these too. The wingless part makes this extremely simple. Put some Repashy vitamin dust into a plastic cup. Shake some flies into the cup and shake the cup a little. Your flies are now dusted and ready to shake into your terrariums. You can dust pinhead crickets in the same way. These are a great food as well, but a little more difficult to raise on your own. You should feed young frogs daily. Adult frogs can skip a day or a weekend without a problem.

Making new cultures: Once a week you'll need to start a new fruit fly culture. This takes five minutes. Put some dry medium into a plastic container (1/3 cup), add water (1/2 cup), and shake it a little to mix it up. Wait a couple minutes for it to solidify, sprinkle a tiny amount of activated yeast on top, and then crumple up a paper towel and throw it on top (or a coffee filter). Then pour some flies in (100 to 300) and shut the lid. In 10 to 14 days this culture will have hundreds of new flies. The culture will continue producing for another week or two, but it's good to start new cultures every week so that you have overlapping ages.

Note: The activated yeast on top is absolutely crucial. Without this the culture will grow mold instead of fruit flies. I think the most common reason that cultures fail is that the activated yeast was forgotten, or it had gone bad (activated yeast is alive and it can die). Since I have so many frogs to feed I cannot afford to lose a batch of cultures. To be safe I always buy fresh activated yeast of two different brands and add some of each to every new culture.

Making new medium: You can buy culture medium from Carolina Biological Supply (www.carolina.com; Formula 4-24 Instant Medium, Plain, a case is cat# 17-3204). You can also buy medium (or actual cultures) from vendors at the local reptile show or from me. Alternatively, you can make it yourself. The recipe is three 2 lb boxes of potato flakes (instant mashed potatoes from the grocery store), 12 cups sugar, and 1.5 cups of [brewer's yeast](#) (try amazon.com or a local feed store for this). The brewer's yeast is dead and is just a cheap protein source. Instead of using mold inhibitor in the medium, I prefer to add a pinch of activated yeast to the top of the culture. This live yeast is a great natural mold inhibitor. My source for the fly containers is Superior Enterprise (superiorenterprise.com; 32 oz insect containers, case of 240, cat#IN-32).