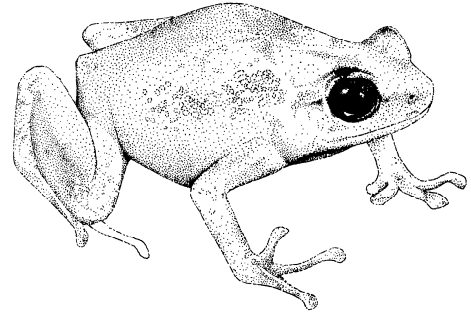


Tropical Factsheets

Building a frog pond

Frogs need food, humidity, hiding places and a place to breed. A good way to help frogs is to build a breeding pond in your garden.



Pond design

- Your frog pond should be above ground level to prevent cane toads from breeding in it. (Otherwise, surround the pond with a 50cm bird-wire fence with 1cm holes, and put the fence as far away from the pond as practical).
- Anything, from a swimming pool to a broccoli box, is suitable as long as it is shaded and the froglets can eventually climb out.
- Any non-metallic clean container can be used. Tadpoles prefer shallow water with a large surface area. Toddlers 'clamshell' wading-pools are very suitable.

Pond position

- Tadpoles are sensitive to heat, so position your pond where it will get some shade.
- Frogs call at night and can be quite loud, so don't put a pond near a bedroom window.

Setting up

- Use a **plastic pond liner**.
- Place a layer of washed **sand or gravel** at the bottom.
- Make a ledge for rocks and plants at the sides which slope into the pond.
- Fill the pond with **water** to a depth of **30cm**.
- Place **rocks and logs** around the edge of the water.
- Position the **native water plants** in the sand or gravel throughout the frog pond.



Water

- Your pond should be filled to a depth of 30 cm with **rain water** or **pond water**.
- Water must be chlorine-free and chemical-free. Stand tap water in sunlight for five days so chlorine can dissipate. Don't use chlorine-neutralizing drops. Keep spare chlorine-free water handy.
- Keep the water clean by **removing any rubbish**.

Plants

- **Native water plants** such as **nardoo** or **reeds** provide shelter, rest areas and food for tadpoles and adult frogs.
- **Native water plants** also help to balance the ecosystem, and keep the **water clean**.
- **Don't** put exotic water plants such as Water Hyacinth and Salvinia into your frog pond because they can choke waterways.
- Grow lots of plants of **various heights** around your frog pond and in your garden.
- Plant **local native trees** to shade your frog pond if there is a lack of cover.
- Keep the garden surrounding your frog pond **well watered**.
- Mulched garden beds and a compost heap will attract **insects**, which will be food for your frogs.
- **Don't** use garden chemicals such as herbicides and pesticides, because frogs absorb chemicals through their skins easily, and may eat poisoned insects.

Mosquito control

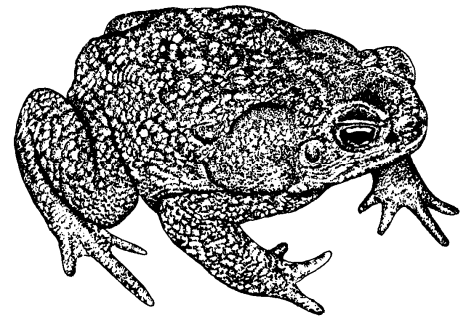
- Blue Eye Fish (*Pseudmugil signifer*) from south-east Queensland eat mosquito larvae, but not tadpoles. Keep three or four of these fish in your frog pond and feed them once a week with fish food to supplement their diet.

Water exit

- Once the tadpoles develop **front legs**, they need to be able to leave the water.
- Ground dwelling frogs particularly need a **rough slope** they can climb easily, or they may drown. Provide **rocks or branches** sloping gently from the water to the banks of the frog pond.

Feeding tadpoles

- Feed tadpoles **boiled lettuce**. Use the unwanted outer dark green leaves.
- **Wash** the leaves thoroughly to remove pesticides, then boil them (15-20 minutes) until they become **soft**.
- Boiled leaves may be conveniently stored in plastic ice cube containers and frozen ready for use.
- Feed tadpoles as much as they will eat every 1-3 days.
- Remove leftover food from the frog pond before re-feeding the tadpoles. Too much food fouls the water; not enough food and the tadpoles will **eat each other** !
- **Fish food** is a good supplement for mature tadpoles.
- **Boiled** milk thistles, **boiled** paw-paw leaves and sliced zucchini may be used for variety in the tadpoles' diet.



Cane Toad

Remove cane toads

- Cane toads are a risk to mature frogs and their tadpoles.
- Remove **cane toad eggs** from your frog pond, or they will poison the water in your frog pond and the 'toadpoles' will **eat** your 'tadpoles'.
- It's easy to identify **toad eggs**, they are the only ones laid in **long clear strands like spaghetti**. The eggs look like a row of little **black dots**.
- Destroy the cane toad eggs by taking them **out of the water** and leaving them to **dry**.
- **Toad tadpoles** tend to be **smaller** than frog tadpoles and are usually found in **dense swarms**.
- Toadpoles are pure black, native frog tadpoles have light-coloured undersides.
- Whether or not you have a frog pond, it's a good idea to collect **adult cane toads** at night and **freeze them in a plastic bag**. ***Beware the poison glands on their backs.***
- Another **humane method** for killing cane toads (there is no reason to be cruel — they didn't ask to come here) is to squirt them with **Dettol or Toadex** — but **not** salt.
- The bodies of the dead cane toads can be **composted**.



For more information

'Raising Native Frogs' by *Alastair Bax* (1995)
Queensland Conservation Council
P.O. Box 12046
Brisbane
Queensland, 4002

Information can also be obtained from the:
Queensland Frog Society
PO Box 7017
East Brisbane QLD 4169
Website: www.qldfrogs.asn.au

Students might be interested in joining the:
Tablelands Frog Club.
Mail Bag 71
Yungaburra
Qld 4872.

Frog Call CDs are available from:
Nature Sound
PO Box 256
Mullumbimby 2482
Website: www.naturesound.com.au