## **YVCipedia AMPHIBIAN**

Red-Eyed Tree Frog Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

The **Red-Eyed Tree Frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*)** is an **arboreal, nocturnal amphibian** native to the rainforests of Central America. Instantly recognizable by their **bright red eyes, vibrant green bodies, and blue-and-yellow flanks**, these frogs are prized for their spectacular appearance.

They are **strictly nocturnal, delicate-skinned amphibians** that require **high humidity, gentle handling practices, and precise husbandry**. Though not overly difficult for keepers with experience, they’re best suited for owners committed to maintaining a **humid, planted, naturalistic environment**.

Adults typically reach **2–3 inches** in length and can live **5–10 years** in captivity with proper care.

## **Housing & Environment**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs need **tall, well-ventilated enclosures** with **vertical climbing opportunities** and dense cover to mimic their natural rainforest habitat.

**Minimum enclosure size:**

* Single adult: **18×18×24 inches** (tall-style terrarium recommended)
* Groups: Larger enclosures with multiple hides and climbing branches
* More space supports natural behaviors and reduces stress

**Key enclosure features:**

* Secure, escape-proof doors or lid
* Multiple vertical and horizontal branches for climbing
* Cork bark, bamboo, and dense plantings (live or artificial) for hiding and security
* Leafy coverage for daytime sleeping sites

**Recommended substrates:**

* Coconut husk fiber or cypress mulch for humidity retention
* Sphagnum moss in humid hides
* Bioactive setups with live plants for advanced keepers

**Cleaning guidelines:**

* Spot-clean feces daily or as needed
* Replace substrate fully and disinfect enclosure monthly or more often if needed

## **Heating & Lighting**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs require **warm, humid conditions** with **gentle heating**.

**Temperature range:**

* **Daytime:** 75–82°F
* **Nighttime:** Can safely drop to ~68–72°F
* Avoid sustained temperatures over 85°F

**Heating:**

* Low-wattage ceramic heat emitters or radiant heat panels
* Side-mounted heat mats if needed (always thermostat-controlled)
* Avoid direct, intense heat sources that can over-dry the enclosure

**Lighting:**

* Red-eyed tree frogs are **nocturnal** and don’t need bright lighting
* **Low-level UVB (2–5%) is beneficial** for calcium metabolism and overall health
* Provide a **12-hour light/dark cycle** with timers to maintain circadian rhythm

## **Humidity**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs need **high humidity** to stay healthy, ideally **70–90%**, with **daily fluctuations** to mimic natural rainforest conditions.

**Humidity management tips:**

* Mist the enclosure 1–2 times daily, ideally in the evening when they become active
* Include live plants to help retain moisture
* Provide **humid hides** with damp sphagnum moss
* Use **digital hygrometers** for accuracy
* Ensure ventilation to prevent mold and bacterial growth

Proper humidity is **critical** for healthy skin and successful shedding.

## **Water & Hydration**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs **absorb water through their skin and cloaca**, making **clean, dechlorinated water** essential.

**Water guidelines:**

* Provide a **shallow water dish** large enough for soaking
* Change water daily to avoid bacterial contamination
* Always use **dechlorinated or treated water**
* Daily misting also provides drinking opportunities as frogs lap droplets from leaves and enclosure walls

## **Diet & Feeding**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs are **insectivorous predators**, feeding on a variety of live prey.

**Feeding guidelines:**

* Juveniles: Feed **daily**
* Adults: Feed **every 2–3 days**

**Appropriate prey items:**

* Gut-loaded crickets
* Dubia roaches (appropriately sized)
* Black soldier fly larvae
* Occasional small waxworms or superworms (treat only—high fat)

**Feeding tips:**

* Prey size should be **no larger than the width between the frog’s eyes**
* Dust insects with **calcium (with D3) 2–3× weekly**
* Use a **multivitamin supplement 1× weekly**
* Remove uneaten insects to prevent stress or biting

## **Behavior & Handling**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs are **nocturnal, shy, and delicate**, best treated as **display animals** rather than frequent handling pets.

**Handling recommendations:**

* Limit handling to reduce stress and avoid damaging sensitive skin
* Always **wet hands with dechlorinated water** before touching the frog
* Support the frog gently, without squeezing
* Move slowly to avoid startling them—sudden movements can trigger jumps or defensive behavior

Stress from over-handling can lead to **poor feeding response, weight loss, and health problems**.

## **Healthcare & Veterinary Care**

Schedule an **initial veterinary exam** after acquisition and plan for **annual wellness checkups** with an experienced exotics veterinarian.

**Common health issues:**

* Skin infections from poor hygiene or low humidity
* Shedding problems (dysecdysis)
* Parasites (especially in wild-caught individuals)
* Nutritional metabolic bone disease (from poor diet or lack of supplementation)
* Obesity from overfeeding fatty prey

**Warning signs:**

* Loss of appetite
* Lethargy or weakness
* Abnormal skin lesions, discoloration, or excessive shedding
* Bloating or open-mouth breathing
* Abnormal posture or reluctance to climb

Early veterinary care helps **prevent complications** and supports **long-term health**.

## **Enrichment & Habitat Design**

Red-Eyed Tree Frogs **thrive in lush, naturalistic enclosures** with vertical complexity and dense plant cover.

**Enrichment strategies:**

* Multiple branches and cork bark for climbing
* Dense foliage for cover and humidity retention
* Moist hides with damp moss to support shedding
* Live plants to help maintain humidity and create natural hiding places
* Varied textures and décor rearranged occasionally to encourage exploration

A well-designed enclosure supports **natural behaviors** and reduces **stress**.

## **Facts & FAQs**

* Named for their **bright red eyes**, which help startle predators.
* Native to **Central American rainforests**, living in warm, humid, densely vegetated areas.
* Famous for **colorful green bodies with blue and yellow flank markings**.
* Nocturnal hunters that **rest camouflaged on leaves during the day**.
* Lifespan of **5–10+ years** in captivity with excellent care.

### **Supplies & Care Checklist**

* Tall, secure terrarium (≥18×18×24 inches for adults)
* Ceramic heat emitter or radiant panel (thermostat-controlled)
* Digital thermometers and hygrometer
* Low-level UVB light (2–5%, optional but beneficial)
* Multiple climbing branches and cork bark
* Live or artificial plants for cover and humidity
* Moist hides with sphagnum moss
* Appropriate substrate (coconut husk, cypress mulch, bioactive options)
* Misting system or spray bottle
* Shallow, stable water dish with dechlorinated water
* Feeding tongs for safe insect offering
* Gut-loaded feeder insects
* Calcium and multivitamin supplements
* Cleaning supplies and amphibian-safe disinfectants
* Secure carrier for veterinary visits

*Yarmouth Veterinary Center*