

Small Toad

A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

Toads (*Bufo*) are among the easiest amphibians to keep in a classroom. Their only special requirement is live food.

Note: *Always wash your hands after touching an amphibian or any part of an amphibian's habitat. For more information, go to Carolina.com (Teacher Resources tab, Care Sheets section) and view our "Amphibians, Reptiles, and Prevention of Salmonella Transmission" statement.*

Immediate Care and Handling

Open the shipping container and remove the cup (3 toads) or box (more than 3 toads) containing the toads. You will find the toads in damp sphagnum moss. Have a habitat ready to receive them.

Habitat

Prepare a terrarium (item #674310 or 674403) by covering its bottom with substrate to a depth of 3 to 4". Most toads burrow, so don't skimp on the substrate whether using garden soil (insecticide- and herbicide-free), shredded coconut husks (item [#159697](#)), or reptile litter (item [#674432](#)). The substrate should be damp but not dripping wet. Allow 15 to 20 cm² (6 to 8") of surface area for each toad, with at least 1 hiding place for each. For a water container, use a bowl shallow enough for the toads to climb into and out of easily. Place the top of the bowl flush with the top of the substrate. Fill the bowl with approximately 2.5 cm (1") of dechlorinated water. Toads tend to uproot plants, so choose sturdy live plants with a low light requirement or use plastic plants in your terrarium. Although toads neither climb nor leap well, a cover keeps their live food from escaping. Position the terrarium away from sunlight and do not use a lamp. Toads do well at room temperature or below (16 to 25° C, 60 to 76° F), so a supplemental heat source is unnecessary and may even be detrimental.

Maintenance

Toads tend to be voracious eaters. Allow them a day to acclimate to their new home before feeding, then offer food every 2 to 3 days. Food should be small enough to fit in the toads' mouths. Crickets (item #143556) are a staple food, but toads may also accept mealworms (item [#144272](#)), pill bugs (item #143060), and waxworms (item #143928, wax moth larvae). We recommend occasionally dusting the

food with a mineral/vitamin supplement (item [#674347](#)). If you can provide them, toads relish houseflies.

Change the water in the bowl with fresh dechlorinated water every day. Few toads will drink from the bowl, but they may climb in for a soak and use the bowl as a toilet.

Most toads never adapt to being touched, so it is best to leave them alone. If you must pick up a toad to move it, either wear gloves or rinse your hands to remove oils that can damage the toad's skin. Toads do not bite. They do often urinate when frightened: Don't let this harmless action startle you into dropping the toad. They also secrete a toxin from glands near the back of the head that can irritate human mucous membranes, so dispose of gloves and wash hands after handling a toad.

FAQs

Why isn't my toad eating?

Toads can go a long time without food, and they eat less in winter. If the problem persists, change to a different food. Add a few live flies to the habitat. Their buzzing flight will get your toad's attention. A healthy toad is plump. If your toad is skinny, it isn't getting enough food.

Why does my toad spend most of its time hiding?

Toads tend to be inactive during the day. You may need to reduce light exposure to encourage activity.

Will a toad ever eat a non-living food?

Sometimes. Toads are attracted by movement. Dangle a food pellet by a loose-fitting string to see if the toad will take it. Drop a food pellet several cm in front of a toad. If it doesn't snap up the pellet, shine the beam of a laser pointer on the pellet and move it about. Sometimes this stimulates the toad to snap up the food. (Toads can't grip well with their mouths, so if one swallows the string, just pull it out of its mouth.)

Problems? We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

Orders and replacements: 1-800-334-5551, then select Customer Service.

Technical Support and Questions: caresheets@carolina.com



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