Keeping Tadpoles as Pets

Can I keep tadpoles at home?



Yes- it's a great way to see how a frog develops.

But before you collect the frogspawn you will need to have all the necessary equipment to keep your tadpoles happy and safe. Below are some 2 month old tadpoles.



What you need before you start



- A clean plastic container or fish tank (4-5 litre capacity).
- Pond or rain water (or even bottled water or treated tap-water).
- Without treatment tap water has chlorine in it which will kill tadpoles.
- A **calm space** out of direct sunlight near a window or outside.

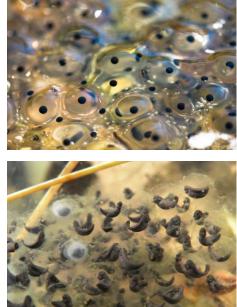
Where can I find frogspawn and tadpoles?

At the beginning of spring frogs lay their eggs in clumps in ponds.

Check the edges of ponds in gardens or nearby parks, or take a trip to the nearest woods and look for them in ponds.

- Bring 2 clean jars with screw tops.
- Lie down at the edge of the water and reach in to **scoop** up some frogspawn or some tadpoles. Use the **second jar** to **top up** the **water**.
- Try to collect some **underwater plants**. Put them in the other jar with more water from the pond. You can use this water to fill your tank.





What do tadpoles eat?

Young tadpoles first eat their way out of the egg mass. Then they feed by **scraping** at the leaves of **pond weed**. They also like **fresh lettuce** and **baby spinach**. Before you feed them, **rinse the leaves thoroughly**.

We are feeding the school tadpoles pond weed and dried worms:





Tadpoles only need a little bit of food. It is very important that their water is clean all the time, so change the leaves if they start to look sad!

As tadpoles get bigger they will eat anything they can! You can feed them with flakes of **fish fry food** from a pet shop.

When tadpoles **grow legs** they become **carnivorous** (meat eaters). They will **eat each other** unless you provide meat for them. Small pieces of meat can be suspended in the water on a piece of string. *Change the meat every day*.



Caring for your tadpoles

Your tadpoles will thrive if they are **properly cared for** and you will see them grow. See some tips for caring for your tadpoles below.

- 1. *Make sure the water is clean.* Change the water if it becomes cloudy. Remember to only use **rain water** or water **collected from a pond**. You can use tap water if it has been allowed to stand for about three days or if it has been specially treated.
- 2. Try to keep the **water temperature steady** and between **15 and 20** degrees C.
- 3. Never change the water temperature suddenly as this is likely to kill the tadpoles.
- 4. If you leave your tank outdoors or near a window make sure it is in a **shady** place.



What's next?

Later your tadpoles will gradually **grow front legs**, **lose their tails**, and transform into **baby frogs**. Baby frogs are sometimes called **froglets**. Here are some tiny froglets:



When the tadpoles grow legs they will need a way to get out of the water. You can put some **stones or twigs for them to climb**. It might take **6-12 weeks** for them to reach this stage.

Once they develop into frogs they are ready to be **released** at a site near a **pond** and after growing into adults they can **start a new life cycle**

