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CULTURING TROPICAL SPRINGTAILS (*Seira* sp.)

Equipment required:

- Springtail Starter Culture
- Unventilated culturing container
- Culture medium (50:50 coir/orchid bark)
- Suitable food-source (porridge oats/ vegetable peelings/ premixed springtail food)

Springtails are hexapods frequently found in soil, leaf litter and other decaying material where they eat detritus and microbes. They are found worldwide in temperate and tropical areas and a number of species are used in dart frog husbandry as both feeder insects (especially useful for newly morphed froglets too small to take fruit flies) and as tank custodians to dispose of rotting material, mould and debris.

The species most commonly used are:

Tropical springtails (*Folsomia candida* and *Seira* sp.) preferring temperatures around 25°C or more
European black springtail (*Tomocerus longicornus*) thriving at room temperature.

They are easily cultured and require little attention. You need an unventilated container (I find empty 2L empty ice cream tubs ideal) and a base mixture of half coco fibre and half coarse orchid bark (you can buy ready made culturing media) and a starter culture. Once the starter culture has been added this media needs to be kept moist but not wet, misting every couple of days is fine but allowing the media to dry out will kill the culture.

Feed the springtails on small amounts of vegetable matter and/or fine porridge oats (with added vitamin powder). I also place lump wood charcoal on top of the media - springtails will gather on this and you simply tap them off the charcoal into your vivaria. Premixed springtail food is available from many suppliers.