



FROGS AND FOOD

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CULTURING WAXWORMS

Equipment required:

- Waxworm Starter Culture
- Ventilated culturing container
- Suitable culture medium
- Kitchen towel / corrugated cardboard for pupation and roosting

Most amphibian and reptile keepers are familiar with the greater waxmoth larvae but the larvae of the lesser waxmoth are much smaller (10 - 20mm) and make a nice treat for larger darts such as *D. tinctorius*.

First you need a suitable container - I use the large plastic containers used in sweet shops to hold sweets. In the plastic lid cut out a ventilation hole and on this glue some very fine wire mesh (the larvae can easily chew through most things - including clothes!).

In this place a mixture of porridge oats, wheatgerm and wheatbran (ratio 1:1:1) and then enough honey and glycerine (usually found in the baking section of supermarkets) until you get a relatively dry crumbly consistency. Some people advocate the addition of beeswax to new cultures but I have never done this (in the wild both forms of waxmoth are major pests of beehives).

Add this mixture to the culture vessel to a depth of about 8-10cm and on top of this add your starter culture.

Place a crumpled piece of kitchen paper on top of this to provide an increased surface area on which the larvae can pupate.

Keep your culture in a warm, dark place and after a few weeks you should have a culture teeming with larvae.

You can use any excess larvae or adult moths to start new cultures and by using an amount of your original culture medium you will also transfer eggs to boost your culture too.

When feeding these to your frogs place in a lipped feeding bowl (such as that used with mealworms) as if placed directly in your vivarium these larvae will just burrow into the substrate.

These larvae are high in fat and so are not recommended for regular use but are good as a treat and in aiding weight gain in thin frogs.