

Ranitomeya vanzolinii

Found on thefroglady.org

Difficulty: Beginner - Intermediate

The *Ranitomeya vanzolinii* is a diurnal frog with semi-arboreal activity peaking in early morning & early evening. Nicknamed vanzos or Brazilian poison frog (due to location), they have fairly consistent coloring on their torso with yellow dots or lines on a black background and blue with black spots on their legs. Females are larger than the male frogs; sizes will range between $\frac{3}{4}$ "-1" in length with juveniles measuring around $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Due to their small stature, relative quickness and shyness, they receive an intermediate label from some keepers, however they are less territorial than other *Ranitomeya* so they do well in groups. A lifespan of 10 years in the ideal conditions of captivity is not unheard of, however 5-8 years is more common in captivity.

Ranitomeya vanzolinii are found in the lowland rainforests of Brazil through the pre-montane cloud forest in Southern Peru. Most often located between the 200m and 1280 m elevation levels climbing through leaf litter, shrubs, trees and above the forest floor. They will utilize tiny pools of water that naturally form in plants for their breeding. In the United States, there are 2 sources either imported through European Imports or via Understory Enterprises (Mark Pepper).

Terrarium Design

Ranitomeya vanzolinii will appreciate a lush tank oriented in the vertical orientation filled with lots of leaf litter, bromeliads and driftwood to provide adequate foraging opportunities. In the wild, adult *Ranitomeya vanzolinii* are primarily arboreal with adults being found 7-12 ft above the forest floor.

Terrarium Size

QTY	10 GAL	18x18x24 OR 29 GAL HORZ.	36x18x24
1			
PAIR			
3-4			
5-7			

Temperature

Ranitomeya vanzolinii prefer low to mid-70°F's but will tolerate temperatures between 65°F-80°F; any temperature over 85°F can be fatally dangerous.

Temperatures can be decreased overnight to 63°F-70°F to mimic their natural conditions.

Humidity

Humidity should maintain between 80-100%. *Ranitomeya vanzolinii* can tolerate as low as 50% for a short period of time if they have access to clean water. Low humidity tank level without fresh water can be fatal.

Lighting

Lighting shall be provided on a 12 on/ 12 off day night timer to mimic their natural conditions. I would recommend a light temperature of 6,500K or brighter for healthy plants.

Feeding

Vanzos will eat melanogaster fruit flies as a staple in their diet. Full grown adults will

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consume hydei as well. Bean weevils can be provided as a treat to adults as they are harder to digest due to their tough exoskeleton. All *Ranitomeya vanzolinii* will enjoy isopods & springtails.

Eggs will hatch into tadpoles within 14-16 days. Males will carry tadpoles on their backs and will deposit into a water filled film canister or the water cavity that has accumulated within the plants. Females will deposit unfertilized eggs for tadpoles to eat.

Supplements

A calcium supplement should be dusted daily and a vitamin A supplement can be provided monthly. Be careful not to overdose Vitamin A as it is fatal in high doses.

Groups/ Social Behaviors

Ranitomeya vanzolinii frogs are very sociable and do well in groups. Once juvenile *vanzolinii*'s hit 5-8 months, the tank dynamics will change as the frogs will begin to reach sexual maturity. Females dynamics may result in eating each other's eggs or wrestling but as long as adequate hiding & barriers are provided they should stay harmonious. Groups of same sex frogs have been found to be docile & amicable towards each other.

Sexing

Females are wider in front of the hips and more pear shaped than males as they are full of eggs. Only males will call.

Breeding

Vanzo's are one of the only frog species found thus far that appear to be monogamous in the wild so they are best housed in pairs. Males will call females to suitable egg laying site where the female will lay 2-4 eggs on a smooth surface (bromeliad or film canister) every 5-7 days.

Eggs

Eggs can be raised in the tank by their parents or hand raised outside of the terrarium. The easiest method is to remove part of the leaf or whole film canister that contains the eggs. The leaf or film canister can then be transferred into a plastic container with a small amount of water on the bottom.

Tadpoles

Ranitomeya vanzolinii parents have excellent parental care. It will take between 60-80 days for the tadpole to complete metamorphosis. Tadpoles will eat dead fruit flies, tadpole food & even unfertilized eggs from mom. This is a very cool experience to observe in a tank and I highly recommend you let the parents tank raise.

Froglets

Newly emerged froglets will spend the majority of their time in the leaf litter on the floor of the terrarium. During the first 10-14 days, small fruit flies can be managed, however springtails will almost exclusively be eaten. Once froglets are 6-8 weeks old, they can be removed from their parents and can be communally raised in a simple tank or rehomed. Older juveniles will be better adjusted and ready for new surroundings.