

How to successfully hatch Triops

Introduction to Triops

Triops are prehistoric critters that existed before the dinosaurs. They look a bit like tadpoles with shields, hence they are also known as the tadpole shrimp and shield shrimp. Most triops are hermaphrodites, which means their eggs do not need to be fertilized and will still hatch into little baby triops.



There are many species. The common species are *Triops australiensis*, *Triops granarius*, *Triops cancriformis*, *Triops longicaudatus*, *Triops newberryi*, and so on. Triops can be found in the wild in areas where bodies of water tend to evaporate and dry up for several weeks or months. Then, the rain pours from heaven to drench those areas and bring back new life—including hatching triops eggs that were laid before the drought.

Triops are omnivores; they eat anything including each other if there is no other food available. In their natural habitat, they feed on plant matter, algae, daphnia and mosquito larvae. The adults of the *Triops Australiensis* species can grow up to 7cm long, while other species like the *Triops Cancriformis* grow up to 11cm long and have a lifespan of about 90 days.

Hatching the Eggs

- Fill a shallow container with a minimum of 300ml of bottled spring water (do not use tap or rain water).
- Add one teaspoon of leaf litter (almond leaves or dried leaf litter from your yard will do) to the container of water.
- Empty the vile with the eggs into the water.
- Keep the hatching container in a warm place with bright light. The optimum temperature for hatching is above 23°C. Hatched triops can survive at temperatures between 23°C and 32°C.
- The eggs should start to hatch in 24 to 48 hours under the right conditions. Sometimes only one or two eggs will hatch; you'll be very lucky to get half a dozen babies.
- Some say to feed the babies on day one but wait until the hatchlings are 3 days old and swimming freely.
Reason: The leaf litter dissolves in the water and produces liquid food for the babies. Adding solid food to the water will only pollute the water and can kill the babies.

Feeding and Caring for the Babies

- After 3 days, crush a small pellet of baby fish food and add a tiny amount in the water to feed them. You can also use spirulina powder from the health food aisle (dip the tip of a toothpick into the algae and then into water).
- After a few hours, **remove any uneaten food and other waste** with a pipette.
- If the water in the container has not evaporated much, leave it alone. Otherwise, add in a few drops of clean spring water, but not too much. A sudden change in water condition can also kill the babies and that includes adding too much clean water at a time.
- Feed the babies twice a day with a small amount of food.
- Do the same for the next few days. Increase the amount of food if required. Clean up the uneaten food and waste. Add in some clean water.
- After one week, your triops should be at least 5mm long and eating well. You may have only one left in the container if it hasn't already cannibalized all the other siblings, if any.
- The water will start to get a little cloudy. Change about a third of the water every day.

The Move

- After 8 days, they are ready to be moved to a larger tank.
- Wash the sand with spring water and put it on the bottom of the tank.
- Fill the tank to two-thirds full with spring water.
- Float the hatching container of triops on top of the tank of water for at least ten minutes to equalize the water temperatures.
- Pour some of the water from the hatching container into the tank without tipping them out.
- Fill back the hatching container with some tank water. This is to acclimatize them to the water in the tank.
- Repeat pouring and filling the small container with tank water a few times.
- Finally, gently pour them into the bigger tank.
- Let the triops settle in their new environment for a couple of hours before feeding them.
- In order to keep them healthy, continue to feed them twice a day, remove the waste on the bottom of the tank and do the daily water changes.
- You can feed your triops par-boiled vegetables, grated carrot, house flies, earthworms, bloodworms, mosquito larvae, daphnia, brine shrimp or commercial fish food.