Tropical Bioactive Foliage, Vines & Aroids

Pothos • Scindapsus • Philodendron • Syngonium • Ficus pumila • Peperomia • Calathea & Begonia

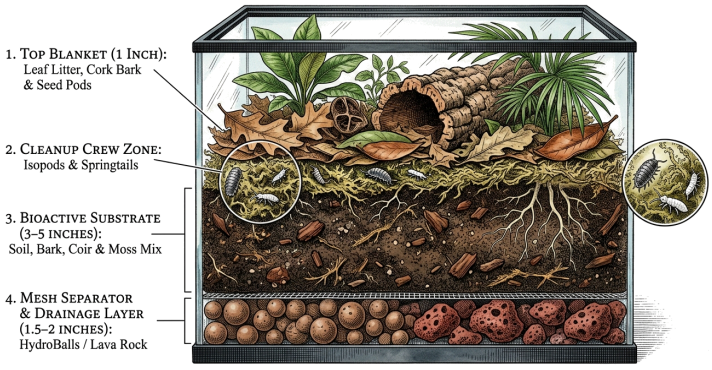


The Quick Version: Live tropical plants turn a reptile or frog tank into a self-cleaning ecosystem—anchoring climbing lanes, holding **60%–80%+ humidity**, and absorbing waste nitrates broken down by your springtails and isopods! This guide covers our tropical foliage wall from **Little Prince of Oregon Nursery**, **Josh's Frogs**, and **Airplant Man**, including soil layering, bare-rooting vs. the 3–6 week grow-out rule, and species-by-species notes.

BEST FOR	LIGHTING	HUMIDITY	SUBSTRATE	WATER RULE
Geckos, Frogs, Snakes & Inverts	**6500K Plant LED (10–12 hrs)**	**60%–85% RH (Match Animal)**	**3–5" ABG / Tropical Bioactive**	**RO, Distilled, or Dechlorinated**

1. The 4-Layer Bioactive Stack & Plant Prep

MATCH TEMP & HUMIDITY TO YOUR ANIMAL FIRST — THEN PICK PLANTS FOR EACH ZONE!



1. Drainage + Mesh
1.5–2" HydroBalls/BioDrain + mandatory mesh screen barrier — **Prevents Root Rot**

2. Bioactive Soil
3–5" ABG or Tropical Bioactive Mix pre-moistened before planting — **Damp, Not Swampy**

3. Leaf Litter & Crew
1" dry oak/magnolia leaves + Springtails & Isopods over roots — **Feeds Plant Roots**

4. Rinsing vs. Grow-Out
Rinsing removes loose dirt, NOT systemic nursery pesticides! — **3–6 Wk Quarantine**

5. 6500K Daylight LED
UVB bulbs help reptiles, but plants need 6500K full-spectrum LED — **10–12 Hours / Day**

2. Two Ways That Work — Pick What Fits Your Home

SHORT & SWEET: BOTH OPTIONS WORK GREAT

Animal-Safe Grower Stock vs. General Nursery Pots

What makes a plant animal-safe is how it was grown and what was sprayed on it:

VIVARIUM-GROWN STOCK (READY AFTER GENTLE SOIL RINSE)

Plants grown specifically for vivariums (such as **Josh's Frogs** pesticide-free stock) are raised without systemic chemicals. Gently rinse loose potting media off roots in lukewarm dechlorinated water and plant!

GENERAL GARDEN CENTER POTS (3-TO-6-WEEK GROW-OUT RULE)

NEHERP notes: **bare-rooting and rinsing are NOT pesticide-removing procedures**. Any plant from a general nursery (or going with sensitive frogs where you want maximum caution) needs a **3–6+ week grow-out** outside the animal tank. Never recommend a household bleach dip.

Zone Placement & Pruning inside 10 to 75 Gallon Tanks

Every plant on this guide is sized for standard 10 to 75 gallon terrariums—place each species by light and moisture zone:

BACK WALL & CANOPY VINES (FICUS PUMILA, POTHOS, SCINDAPSUS & HEARTLEAF PHILODENDRON)

Pin **Creeping Fig** (*Ficus pumila* 'Variegated' & miniature 'Quercifolia' String of Frogs) to cork bark so its tiny aerial roots shingle the background, and drape compact **Pothos** ('N'Joy', 'Glacier', 'Manjula'), **Satin Pothos** (*Scindapsus pictus*), and **Heartleaf Philodendron** ('Brasil', 'Micans') across branches.

WELL-DRAINED MID-ZONE VS. MOIST FLOOR (PEPEROMIA VS. CALATHEA & PILEA)

Grower Warning: *Peperomia* have semi-succulent stems and **do not appreciate a soaked or saturated substrate**—plant them in elevated, well-drained mid-zones! Save damp floor corners for compact **Calathea**, **Fittonia**, and **Pilea**.

Herbivore & Nibbler Check: Which Leaves Are Safe If Tasted?

Many tropical aroids contain calcium oxalate crystals that irritate mouths if chewed heavily:

FOR INSECTIVORES, FROGS, GECKOS & SNAKES (AROIDS: POTHOS, PHILODENDRON, SYNGONIUM)

Crested Geckos, Dart & Tree Frogs, Chameleons, Ball Pythons, and Corn Snakes don't eat foliage—making sturdy vining aroids the #1 climbing and cover plants for their tanks!

FOR PLANT-NIBBLERS (CALLISIA TURTLE VINE, PEPEROMIA, PILEA, PRAYER PLANTS)

If your pet tastes leaves (such as **Veiled Chameleons, Tortoises, or Blue Tongue Skinks**), skip aroids/Dieffenbachia and choose **Turtle Vine** (*Callisia repens*), **Peperomia**, **Pilea**, **Calathea/Maranta**, or **Spider Plants**.

Flip Over for Page 2: Feeding Schedule, Team Tips & Grab-and-Go Checklist →

3. Species-by-Species Cheat Sheet (10–75 Gal Vivariums)

LITTLE PRINCE & JOSH'S FROGS TERRARIUM STOCK — LIGHT, MOISTURE & PRUNING

Compact Vining Aroids
Pothos, Scindapsus, Heartleaf Philodendron & Dwarf Syngonium

Pothos (*Epipremnum* 'N'Joy', 'Manjula', 'Glacier', 'Golden'), **Satin Pothos** (*Scindapsus pictus* 'Exotica', 'Silver Lady'), **Heartleaf Philodendron** (*P. hederaceum* 'Brasil', 'Micans'), & dwarf **Syngonium** ('Pixie') are bulletproof climbers for 10–75 gal tanks: moderate-to-bright 6500K LED, 60–80% RH, and easy tip-pruning whenever vines reach the screen top.

Creepers & Semi-Succulents
Ficus pumila, Muehlenbeckia, Hoya & Peperomia

Creeping Fig (*Ficus pumila* 'Variegated' & tiny 'Quercifolia' String of Frogs) and **Wire Vine** (*Muehlenbeckia*) carpet backgrounds fast — **trim monthly** so they don't smother slower plants! **Peperomia** ('Napoli Nights', 'Rana Verde', 'Rosso', 'Frost', String of Turtles) & compact **Hoya** ('Krimson Queen', 'Curtsii') need airy, well-drained pockets (never soggy feet).

Patterned Floor & Begonias
Compact Calathea, Begonia, Pilea, Fittonia & Cryptanthus

Compact **Calathea / Maranta** ('Freddie', 'Makoyana', 'Rattlesnake'), **Fittonia** (Nerve Plant), & **Pilea** ('Moon Valley', 'Aquamarine', 'Silver Tree') love 70%+ RH and **RO/distilled water**. Terrarium **Begonias** ('Stained Glass', ' Bowerae') & **Jewel Orchids** (*Ludisia*) need humid air but **no standing water on leaves**. **Earth Stars** (*Cryptanthus*) add low rosettes on the floor.

Watering, Pruning & Bioactive Care:

- **RO or Dechlorinated Water** — Never spray chlorinated tap water (kills springtails & burns Calathea tips)
- **Water Soil, Not Just Leaves** — Keep substrate moist like a wrung-out sponge; let leaves dry between mistings
- **Skip Chemical Fertilizers** — Fertilizer beads burn amphibian skin — isopod castings feed roots naturally!
- **Pin & Prune Fast Vines** — Tack vines to cork with stainless pins or superglue gel; prune Ficus monthly

Why Did My New Plant Drop a Few Leaves? Moving a tropical plant from a greenhouse into an enclosed glass terrarium changes light spectrum and airflow overnight. Minor leaf drop on *Ficus*, *Calathea*, or *Begonia* in week 1–2 is normal — keep roots evenly moist (never waterlogged) under a 6500K LED and fresh vivarium-adapted leaves will flush out!

4. Tips, Tricks & Big No-Nos from Our Bioactive & Vivarium Team

REAL-WORLD HABITS THAT KEEP THEM THRIVING

Never Skip the Mesh Barrier
Without a fine mesh screen between your HydroBalls and soil, substrate fouls the drainage water table, turns anaerobic, and rots roots.

Remove Pots & Perlite Beads
Gently shake loose nursery peat and white perlite/fertilizer beads off roots (so reptiles never swallow white beads thinking they're calcium!).

Pair UVB With 6500K LED
Reptile UVB tubes don't emit the red/blue spectrum plants need for photosynthesis — add a 6500K plant LED bar on a 12-hour timer.

Cycle 2–4 Weeks If Possible
Planting and seeding springtails and isopods 2–4 weeks early lets roots anchor firmly before heavy geckos or snakes move in!

5. Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

ASK US ON THE FLOOR — WE'LL HELP YOU MATCH EVERYTHING!

1. BIOACTIVE SUBSTRATE & DRAINAGE

- [ ] 1.5–2" Clay Drainage (Zoo Med HydroBalls / BioDrain)
- [ ] Non-Toxic Substrate Mesh Barrier Screen
- [ ] 3–5" Tropical Bioactive Soil Mix (ABG / ReptiSoil Mix)
- [ ] 1" Dried Oak or Magnolia Leaf Litter + Cork Bark

2. BALANCED 3-ZONE PLANT BUNDLE

- [ ] 1–2 Canopy Climbers (Pothos, Scindapsus, or Heartleaf Philodendron)
- [ ] 1–2 Creepers / Mid-Zone (Ficus pumila, Peperomia, Syngonium)
- [ ] 1–2 Floor Accents (Calathea, Pilea, Fittonia, Cryptanthus)

3. LIGHTING, WATER & CLEAN-UP CREW

- [ ] Full-Spectrum 6500K Plant LED Bar + 12-Hr Timer
- [ ] RO / Distilled Water or ReptiSafe Dechlorinator
- [ ] Temperate White Springtails + Dwarf White / Powder Orange Isopods

A Quick Note from Our Team — Keep Learning & Ask Us Anytime!

The quick version: live plants transform a glass box into a living ecosystem! Match your temperature and humidity to your animal first, use a true 6500K plant LED alongside your reptile lighting, and water with RO, distilled, or dechlorinated water for **years of lush living canopy** — use these two pages as your home-base cheat sheet, grab our 1-Page Bioactive Substrate Recipe Guide for exact soil ratios, and stop by Critter Cabana (Newberg) or Gresham Pet Supply anytime to pick out live plants, cork bark, and isopods!

MY VIVARIUM PLANT LIST & DATE PLANTED

Enclosure & Resident Species: _____

Canopy / Mid / Floor Plants: _____

Date Planted & Clean-Up Crew: _____