INSIDE FLAP • KEEPER HABITS

## 4 Keys to Long-Term Health

**Small Daily Habits That Prevent 95% of Vet Visits**

### 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!

**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!



BACK COVER • TAKE THIS TO THE AISLE

## Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

### 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

### MY VIVARIUM PLANT LIST & DATE PLANTED & FEEDING LOG

Enclosure & Species: _____

Plants & Clean-Up Crew: _____

Watering / Misting Schedule: _____

**Critter Cabana & Cascade Pet Supply**

Questions about bioactive soil, plant lighting, or isopods? Stop by Newberg or Gresham anytime — we're here for the full years of lush living canopy!



CRITTER CABANA & CASCADE PET SUPPLY • CARE GUIDE

# 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.

### QUICK VITAL STATS AT-A-GLANCE

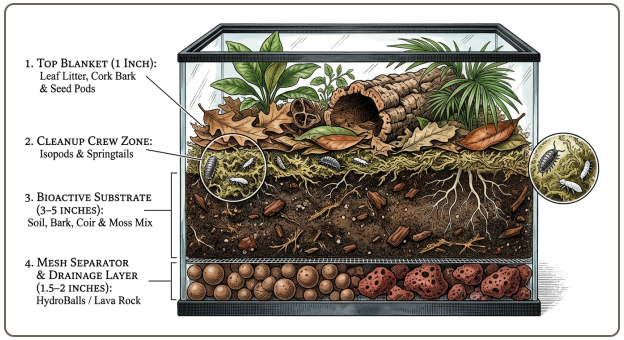
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|---|---|
| BEST FOR<br>**Geckos, Frogs, Snakes & Inverts** | LIGHTING<br>**6500K Plant LED (10–12 hrs)** |
| HUMIDITY<br>**60%–85% RH (Match Animal)** | SUBSTRATE<br>**3–5" ABG / Tropical Bioactive** |
| WATER RULE<br>**RO, Distilled, or Dechlorinated**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

OPEN FOR PLANTING ZONES, SPECIES NOTES, CARE & CHECKLIST →

STEP 1 • ZONES, SOIL & PREP

# 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**

**6500K LED & Pure Water Rule:** Reptile heat and UVB bulbs don't emit plant-growth spectra — pair them with a **6500K full-spectrum LED bar** and always mist with **RO, distilled, or dechlorinated water**!



STEP 2 • STOCKED STORE OPTIONS

# Two Ways That Work

**Pick Option A or Option B Based on Your Home Setup**

## 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**.

STEP 3 • SPECIES CHEAT SHEET

# 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

**Rinsing vs. 3–6 Week Grow-Out Rule:** Rinsing roots removes loose soil, NOT systemic pesticides. Plants from general garden centers need a **3–6 week grow-out quarantine** before entering an animal tank!