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Salamanders belong to the amphibian group and originate from North America. They live in forests, grasslands and marshy areas, near ponds or other water for breeding and in areas with soil for burrowing. Life expectancy ranges from 10-20 years depending on species.

Most species kept as pets start off as aquatic larvae, losing their gills and becoming terrestrial when they reach adulthood.

Adult salamanders should be kept in a semi-aquatic environment with plant-enriched land and a shallow pool of water for bathing.

The vivarium should be a minimum size of 90x45x45cm for a single salamander and larger for pairs.

The recommended base substrate is a 5cm layer of pea gravel or worn slate with a 7-10cm deep top layer of substrate suitable for burrowing and holding humidity. Sterile potting soil, coconut husk or sphagnum moss are all suitable.

The pool should be 2-5cm deep, with a ramp to exit safely. Water quality should be closely monitored and water regularly changed.

Salamanders are thigmotaxic so seek contact or near contact with objects. Hides are important in the environment. These can be provided with tall plants, rocks and bark.

Salamanders are usually nocturnal but need a full-spectrum light during the day with the day length kept at what it would be in their natural habitat.

Salamanders require at least 70% humidity as they absorb water through their skin. This needs to be balanced with clean air for good hygiene. The vivarium should be misted several times daily to ensure optimal humidity. A humidity meter can be used to monitor the environment.

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Most species are best kept individually as they are very territorial and there can be a risk of cannibalism, especially if a large individual is kept with a smaller animal.

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