

# Eastern Newt

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**Species:** *viridescens*  
**Genus:** *Notophthalmus*  
**Family:** Salamandridae  
**Order:** Caudata  
**Class:** Amphibia  
**Subphylum:** Vertebrata  
**Phylum:** Chordata  
**Kingdom:** Animalia



## Conditions for Customer Ownership

We are a USDA compliant facility and hold all necessary permits to transport our organisms. Each state is assisted by the USDA to determine which organisms can be transported across state lines. Some organisms may require end-user permits. Please contact your local regulatory authorities with questions or concerns. To access permit conditions, [click here](#).

**Never purchase living specimens without having a disposition strategy in place.** Live specimens should not be released into the wild! Please dispose of any unwanted organisms using the guidelines below.

## Primary Hazard Considerations

Newts contain the neurotoxin tetrodotoxin in their skin to ward off predators. At the terrestrial juvenile stage the concentration is about ten times higher than as adults. The toxin is not very harmful to humans, although you should always wash your hands thoroughly before and after you handle your newts, its food, or anything it has touched. Never handle a newt if you have broken skin.

## Availability

Eastern newts are collected and are usually available year round. Adult newts will arrive in a waxed paper container packed with sphagnum moss. Upon arrival you should place your newts into a new home; however, they can survive for two days in the shipping container.

## Captive Care

### Habitat:

- Use a glass aquarium or amphibian habitat filled halfway with water.
- Make sure the water added is de-chlorinated. This can be accomplished by adding a de-chlorinating chemical (such as Fluval® Aquaplus 470308-824) or by aerating the water for 24 to 48 hours before you add the newts to the aquarium.
- The temperature of the tank should be maintained at a consistent level between 18–23°C (60–74°F). Avoid any drastic changes in the water temperature, which will add stress to the newt, making them more prone to illness.
- It is optional to equip the aquarium with an air-operated filter and an air stone attached to an air pump. Newts like still water so it is important to buy a filter that is not too turbulent. A piece of driftwood can be placed in front of the filter to help dissipate the force of the water if needed.
- Newts prefer a planted aquarium with a landmass for them to climb up on. A small landmass can consist of Sphagnum Moss, driftwood, rocks, plants, and/or an artificial island made of styrofoam or plastic. It gives them the choice to swim or move around on a dry surface.
- A 25% water change should be performed each week to help maintain appropriate chemical levels in the tank. Replace 30–50% of the water if it appears foggy or there are leftover food remains either floating or at the bottom of the tank.

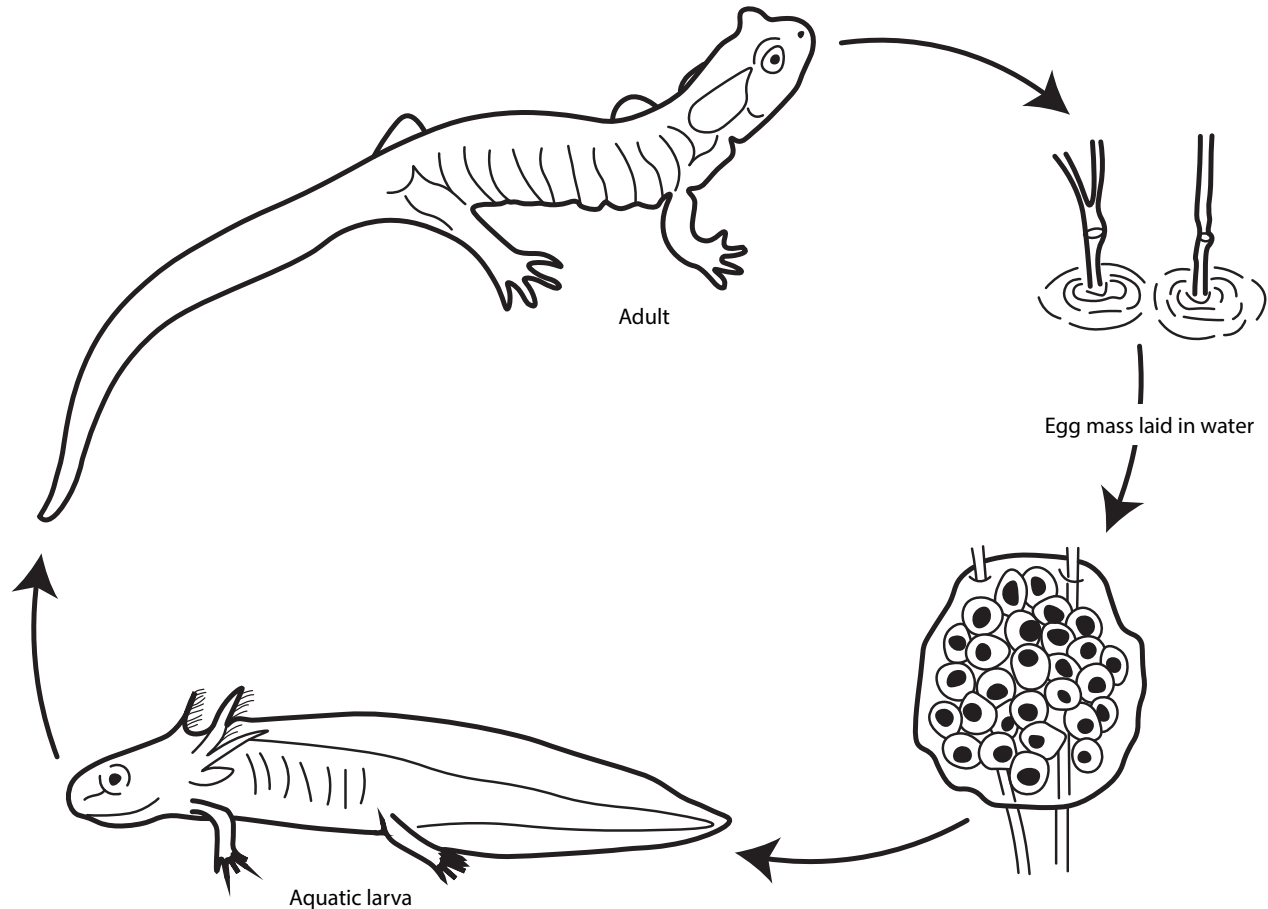
- It is important to not overcrowd the newts in the aquarium; we recommend one newt per gallon of water.
- As aquatic adults they will hunt for mosquito larva, Daphnia (470176-562), Brine Shrimp (470180-300), Earthworms (470210-928), Black Worms (470191-458), and Red Worms (470210-926). You may need to chop up the food accordingly based on the size of your newt. Feed your newts once a day, be careful not to overfeed. We recommend that you feed no more than can be consumed over a five minute span. Any excess food should be removed from the newts' habitat.

## Information

**Method of Reproduction:** The eastern newts breeding season lasts from late winter to early spring, during which the males develop enlarged hind legs, broadly keeled tails, black horny structures on their toes and inner thighs, and swollen vents. These changes are beneficial for attracting and mating with the females. The females lay 200–400 jelly-coated eggs attached to submerged vegetation and swim off to let them hatch on their own.

## Life Cycle

- **Egg:** 200–400 laid by female in spring, eggs take 3–8 weeks to hatch.
- **Aquatic Larvae:** Remains in this stage for 3–4 months, brown-green in color.
- **Terrestrial Juvenile (a.k.a. eft):** Orangish-red in color with spots, about 1" long. The newt stays in this stage until they become sexually mature, which occurs between 2–3 years of age.
- **Adult Newt:** Breeds in the water, about 2–4" long, olive-green or yellowish brown in color. Newt's average life span in the wild is 12 to 15 years.
- **Sexing:** *Male:* Broad, wavy tail, swollen cloacal area, enlarged hind legs, black horny structures on toes and inner



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thighs. *Female*: Flattened tail, moderate cloacal area, average hind legs, no black horny structures.

### Wild Habitat

- The eastern newt is found all over the northern and eastern United States and Canada. Immature larvae and the adult newts live in small bodies of freshwater ranging in size from lakes to narrow ditches.
- The juvenile “eft” stage lives along lakeshore and woodland habitats. The newt remains in the “eft” stage for two to three years until they reach sexual maturity.
- When a newt reaches sexual maturity it will return to the water and remain there for the rest of its life.
- Under special conditions when the body of water the adult lives in dries up or the water chemistry becomes too extreme they have the ability to return to land until conditions become more favorable.
- Predators of the eastern newt include birds, mammals, fish, and other amphibians. The newts’ best line of defense is its toxic skin secretions that wards off many predators.
- Leeches are a major source of adult mortality. Adults will even flee the water and begin biting or scratching themselves in an attempt to rid their bodies of the leech.

### Disposition

Please dispose of excess living material in a manner to prevent spread into the environment. Consult with your schools to identify their preferred methods of disposal. **You can safely use one of the following methods:**

- Treat culture with a 10% bleach solution for 24 hours (1 part bleach to 9 parts culture medium or water culture medium removed). Then rinse bleach solution down the drain with water until you can no longer smell bleach. Rinse remaining materials and containers with water and dispose of them in a general garbage container.
- Carefully wrap specimens and their containers in a biohazard bag (without containing anything sharp that might puncture the bag) and tie closed (a twist tie works well). Autoclave the bag for 30 minutes at 121°C and at a pressure of 15 lbs. PSI. Dispose of autoclaved bag as your school recommends.