

FRUIT BEETLES

There are several types of fruit beetle being successfully reared in captivity at present. These range from the brightly coloured African Sun beetles (*Pachnoda* species), to the large metallic green Goliath fruit beetles. All of these beetles do well under the same condition.

HOUSING

Fruit beetles are best kept in a glass or plastic tank with some ventilation in the lid. They must not become too wet or too dry. The best temperature to keep them at is between 25c-30c, a heat mat is therefore required. I spray the tanks morning and evening with tepid water using a plant sprayer. The tank should be filled to a depth of approximately 15cm-20cm of peat, oak leaf litter and rotten wood. It is important to have a lid on your tank as these beetles fly very well.

FEEDING

These beetles as their name suggests feed on various fruits, in fact I have not found any type of fruit that they will not eat. I use mainly apple, banana and orange, the adult beetles will cluster on the fruit when it is placed in the tank. I feed my beetles twice a week.

BREEDING

Again as their name suggests these beetles like the sun, they are active during the day and hide away at night. They are always more active during sunny spells, it is therefore advisable to place your tank near to a window or source of artificial light. Obviously the tank must not be in direct sun or it will soon over heat and kill the beetles. Light seems to be especially important to stimulate adults to pair. The beetles lay one egg at a time in the substrate, the eggs are spherical and white. It is not long before the eggs hatch, the larvae are also white and look somewhat like maggots. The larvae too eat fruit, it is a good idea to bury some fruit in the substrate, but they will also come up to the surface and slowly drag the fruit down with them. The larvae take three or four months to mature, once fully grown they make a cocoon out of wood and pupate. The pupae are often attached to the sides of the tank, it is important not to disturb them. The adult beetles emerge from the cocoons in a few weeks. These beetles have a relatively short life cycle and are therefore useful for study in schools and colleges.