

Hatching Brine Shrimp Eggs

by Mr. Larry Lawrence, I.U. Axolotl Colony

Brine shrimp eggs are easy to hatch by any of a number of methods. Our present procedure is similar to that described on the label of San Francisco Brand eggs (Metaframe Corp.).

To 3 liters tap water (not dechlorinated) add 10-30 ml eggs and about 60 ml table salt (non-iodinated). Aerate vigorously for 24-48 hr to oxygenate water and prevent eggs from settling. To collect, stop aeration and let settle 5-10 min until eggshells have risen to the top. Siphon shrimp into a shallow container. Depending on the temperature at which they were raised, they will live another 12-24 hr. Before feeding them to the axolotls, strain them from the brine with a fine mesh net or a Kimwipe tissue and resuspend in 20% Steinberg's solution.

Presently we have two 3 liter flasks in a wooden box heated to about 25 degrees C by a 25-60 W light bulb (see below). A different flask is started each day, giving a 48 hr hatching time. If more shrimp are needed, we raise the temperature to about 29 degrees and start both flasks daily. Thirty ml eggs supply enough shrimp for several hundred axolotl larvae.

In the past we used a different brand of shrimp until the hatching percentage gradually declined. This may happen with the present brand, and the only remedy would seem to be to change suppliers; however, Metaframe eggs have given highly satisfactory results for over a year.

Schematic diagram of shrimp hatching apparatus:

