



The Golden Mantella Handbook



Plate 26: After 53 days the front limbs begin to break through in the most advanced specimen



Plate 27: Once the front limbs have broken through, the tadpoles are transferred to a metamorphosis chamber to complete their development

**Day 56 (August 18th 1997)
18:00Hrs**

*The first mantella metamorphoses measuring 10mm and is very plump, probably as a result of the large tail which was absorbed. Remnants of the tail can just be distinguished in the form of a black lump at the end of the rump (see **plate 29**). The dorsal coloration is a green-gold colour while the flanks and cheeks are a brown colour -*

*more characteristic of the yellow mantella (*Mantella crocea*) to which *M.aurantiaca* is closely related. The dorsal criss-cross patterning of this individual apparent through Gosner stages 40 - 45 (body morphing and tail absorption) is now very faint. Strangely enough this was not the case with many other metamorphosing mantellas which retained the criss-cross pattern for several months after emerging onto land. The mantella is removed from the 'metamorphosing chamber' to a 20cm² plastic container which has a base of moist, live sphagnum moss and fitted with a secure but well-ventilated plastic lid. It is maintained at around 72°F. (+/- 2°F.) by locating the container within a temperature-controlled vivarium. Initially it refuses food of springtails, probably because it is still absorbing its tail. It is extremely agile and can leap distances of 60cm+ with ease.*



Plate 29: After 56 days the first golden mantella emerges onto the moss in the metamorphosis chamber