



Fresh Water Fish

Fresh-water fish come in a vast array of sizes, colors, shapes and dispositions providing plenty of choice for fish fanciers. They may remain small or grow to be very large and many have different temperature, feeding and compatibility requirements that must be considered before selecting and setting up your aquarium.

General

The tank and all equipment, decorations and gravel should be thoroughly washed in hot water prior to set up. Do not use soap or cleansers! Prepare tap water by treating with a product to remove chlorine and other harmful chemicals and check the temperature. Most tropical fish need a range of 75-80 deg. F. Only add 1 or 2 fish at first, and allow at least four weeks for the tank to become established before adding more. Monitor the levels of ammonia, nitrate and pH regularly and once the tank is established, exchange about 25% of the water weekly.

Housing

For a beginner a 20 or 30 gallon is large enough to house a good selection of fish. The tank should be located out of direct sunlight, drafts and heavy traffic flow and it will need sturdy support, as it will be heavy when filled. A lid or hood provides safety for the fish and houses a light source. Install a heater and thermometer to control the water temperature and a power filter to provide biological and mechanical filtration, essential to a healthy environment. Substrate, and such features as natural rock, plants or artificial decorations should be safe for fresh-water fish.

Diet

Feed your fish appropriate dried, frozen or live food once or twice a day, making sure not to give them more than they can eat in a few minutes. Left-overs will pollute the water.

Cleaning

Follow the manufacturer's instructions in maintaining filtration equipment and clean the aquarium monthly, using a siphon attachment to suck debris from the bottom and scrubbing off any algae. Never use soap or detergent in cleaning aquarium equipment.

Fertility

Most fresh-water fish will breed in a well maintained tank, unless you select only one sex.

Health

Check your fish daily for signs of stress, disease, fighting or not eating and take appropriate action. Water quality is key in maintaining healthy fish.

Warning

Never use salt-water decorations such as coral, shells or live rock in a freshwater tank as the salts will leach out into the freshwater and kill your fish

More Info

Aquarium Owner's Guide: The Complete Illustrated Reference for the Home Aquarium, by Gina Sandford.

Basics of Fish Care: www.ahc.umn.edu/rar/MNAALAS/Fish.html