

# PASSION *for* PETS

## Discus Fish Information Care Sheet



### Check list

- 24" Tank or larger
- Aquarium Gravel
- Filter
- Aquarium Rocks or Driftwood
- Heater
- Thermometer
- Aquarium Plants
- Light
- Chlorine Neutraliser
- A live bacteria additive
- pH Test kit
- Water Hardness test kit

### SETTING UP YOUR TANK

Choose a location for your discus tank. Position your tank out of main traffic areas and direct sunlight. Thoroughly rinse the aquarium gravel in fresh water through a strainer to remove all sediment and dust particles. Place the aquarium gravel in an even layer across the bottom of the tank. Wash your aquarium rocks and driftwood to remove all dirt. Now decorate your tank. Fill your tank with cold tap water. Add the appropriate amount of water treatments. Place your filter in the tank and plug it in. Set your heater to 30°C and place it on the inside wall of your tank next to the filter. Place the thermometer on the opposite side of the tank to the heater. Place the cover glass on your tank. Place the light tube into the reflector and position it on top of the cover glass. Turn on the filter and light.

### JUST PRIOR TO PURCHASING YOUR DISCUS

You need to have your tank setup and running for a minimum of seven days before you introduce your discus. Two days before you get your discus you will need to perform a pH and hardness test. If the levels are incorrect you will need to make the appropriate adjustments and re-test in 24 hours. Don't introduce your discus until your water quality is stable and correct.

### PURCHASING YOUR DISCUS

Discus are available in many colours and patterns. The full colouring usually doesn't come out until they are of an adult size of 6cm and above, keep this in mind when selecting your discus. When you are ready to purchase your discus a Passion for Pets staff member will be able to let you know what colours and sizes are available at the time.

### ARRIVING HOME

When picking up your discus make sure you take them straight home to limit the amount of stress caused on them. Place the discus (still in the fish bag) in the tank for 10 minutes to adjust to the different water temperatures. After 10 minutes open the bag and allow some of the tank water to mix into the fish bag. Wait a further 2 minutes then gently upend the bag so your discus swim out into the tank. Wait until then next morning before you first feed your discus.

### FEEDING YOUR DISCUS

Discus love to eat a varied diet, one of their favourite foods is Brine Shrimp; they will readily eat this in either the frozen or fresh form. Other suitable foods are frozen beef heart, Tetra colour bits, live black worms and live mosquito larvae. Discus are very slow eaters so it is best to feed them very small amounts three to four times a day.

### TANK MAINTAINENCE

Discus don't like water added straight from the tap. The best thing to do is sit the new water in a bucket and add the water treatments to it and leave it sit for 20 minutes before adding it to the tank. The best way to maintain the tank

is by doing 10% water changes every two days otherwise a 1/3 water change once a week. Discus tanks can be prone to ammonia outbursts, as they are such slow eaters most of their food sinks to the bottom of the tank before they get to it. There are two ways to keep this under control, add a few catfish to the tank to clean up the leftover food. Do frequent 10% water changes using a gravel cleaner. Some hobbyists filter their water through peat this naturally makes the water soft and acid also adding a tannin colouring to the water which discus love.

## SEXING YOUR DISCUS

Sexing discus is almost impossible. It takes years of experience to learn this trait. The most popular method is to buy 4 – 6 discus and allow them to pair off.

## BREEDING DISCUS

When discus breed this is referred to as spawning. The best environment for spawning discus is to have a separate tank (min 60L) that is completely bare (not even aquarium gravel) well filtered with a spawning cone or pole. The spawning pole can be made of 75mm PVC piping glued to the side of the breeding tank with aquarium silicone. Daily 20% water changes need to be made to keep the water clean and to encourage spawning. The water needs to be softer than normal, (around 10 ppm) to spur on spawning. The pH can remain the same at 6.6 – 6.8. The female will lay her eggs on the spawning pole; the male will then fertilize the eggs. Depending on temperature around 60 hours later the eggs will hatch. It is normal for discus to eat their eggs the first few times until they learn what to do. Before the eggs hatch the female secretes mucus which covers her entire body, the babies (fry) will eat this for the first 5 days. When the fry start to swim at a distance from the parent's body this is a good time to remove the parents as some parents may start to eat the fry, be sure that the fry are weaned before doing this. You can start feeding the fry six times a day with fry formula once they are swimming short distances away from their parents. At 20 to 28 days of age you can start feeding frozen beef heart mix as well. At 28 to 42 days you can reduce the feeding to four times a day. Breeding discus takes a while to master so don't be discouraged if you are unsuccessful rearing the fry the first few times. The discus can produce up to 300 fry in a single spawn; the average number is around 100 to 150 fry per spawn. The discus are one of a few species that have learnt to keep all of their fry along their body, this way predators are unable to see the fry, very clever! You will be amazed at the rapid rate, which the fry grow, by 42 days they will be around 2-2.5cm in length.

## LIFESPAN

Discus are considered adults once they have reached 6cm and above. Discus can reach up to 20cm in size when fully grown. With the right water quality and environment the Discus can live for many years. The trick to keeping discus happy is by having really clean water and feeding them very small amounts two to three times per day.

## PLANTS

Plants play a very vital role in a discus tank, as discus are shy they are uncomfortable and stressed without them. A majority of plants will not survive with the high temperatures and acidity of the discus water. There are however a few species that will be suitable such as; Amazon swords, Java fern, Dwarf anubias, thin vallisneria, and Crypts. You will need to add a CO2 dispenser and plant food to keep your plants healthy and wait at least two weeks before introducing plants to a new tank.

## TEMPERATURE

Discus require a temperature of 30°C. It is important to provide a stable temperature without fluctuation. This can be easily monitored by adding a thermometer to your tank and by placing your heater next to the filter as this will cycle the heated water evenly around the tank.

## IMPORTANCE OF LIVE BACTERIA

We always add live bacteria to our tanks. Having large numbers and new strains of live bacteria is very important to maintain a stable water quality. Good bacteria (Cycle) helps to eliminate waste from both fish and left over food turning it from ammonia into less harmful nitrites which your plants can then change into nitrates.

## WATER QUALITY GUIDE

pH	6.5 – 6.8
Hardness	10 – 30 ppm
Temperature	30°C

## CONTACT US

Our friendly staff is always available to answer your questions so please don't hesitate to contact us for further information.

