

## Fish Information Care Sheet



### Tropical tank checklist

#### Needed:

- Filter
- Heater
- Reflector (light)
- Water conditioning set
- Biological bacteria

- Gravel
- Thermometer
- De-chlorinator

#### Recommended:

- Fish net
- Air pump

- Ornaments
- Artificial or real plants
- Gravel siphon
- Algae scrubber

### Cold water tank check-list

#### Needed:

- Water conditioning set
- Biological bacteria
- Gravel
- De-chlorinator

#### Recommended:

- Filter
- Air pump
- Fish net
- Reflector (light)

- Ornaments
- Artificial or real plants
- Algae scrubber
- Gravel siphon

### Tropical vs. cold water

There are two types of domestic fish; tropical and cold water. While each has unique requirements and characteristics, there is a common set of rules that can be applied when choosing and setting up a tank, conditioning the water, adding new fish and maintaining the delicate ecosystem of the aquarium. It is important to decide which type of fish you are intending to keep before you purchase anything.

**Tropical fish** - Popular because of their brilliant colours and shapes and they give an exotic feel to your aquarium. However, they are more challenging to care for than cold water fish and have specific needs, like a heater.

**Coldwater fish** - These are different varieties of goldfish with similar care requirements. They are more robust than tropical fish and your tank won't require a heater.

**Tank** - Interestingly, larger tanks result in fewer problems when owning an aquarium. There is more space for fish to grow, water is more stable and you can keep a wider range of fish. So as a rule of thumb, buy the biggest tank you can afford and have space for.

### Where to put your tank

Put some thought into where your tank goes. It should be away from direct sunlight (the main cause of algae growth), drafts, heaters and stereos.

### Setting up your tank

Before you start setting up your tank, rinse the aquarium, gravel, ornaments, plants etc. in cold water. Do not use hot water or detergents! Add gravel and then place ornaments, stones and plants directly on the bottom of the tank,

working the gravel around them for better stability. Install the filter (and heater and air pump if you have them). Plug in the electrical equipment only after you have filled your tank with water. Filters and air pumps are very important in tropical tanks as higher water temperatures result in less oxygen availability.

## Adding and preparing your water

Fill the tank with fresh water. First you need to add a de-chlorinator. Passion for Pets staff can advise a suitable product. For tropical tanks, heat the water to between 23 - 26 degrees Celsius. Cold water tanks should be around 12 - 20 degrees Celsius. Ideally, wait 24-48 hours for the water clarity and temperature to stabilise.

Now condition the water (test water chemistry) with a test kit. You need to test the pH, GH (water hardness), ammonia, nitrites and nitrates. Desired readings depend on the type of fish you own, however general recommendations are a GH of 100 - 150ppm and a pH of approximately 7. You need to reduce ammonia if it is detected. And add conditioning salts as required and advised in the water conditioning sets for your fish selections. The more you add the higher your GH so follow directions carefully. Alternatively, bring a sample of water in for us to test and ensure you have it right. Next, add 'Cycle' the biological bacteria (ensure it is added after the water is conditioned).

This forms the basis of the aquarium ecosystem and biological filter and will take several weeks to build and stabilise. This is important, so be patient. Ideally you should find the optimum temperature for your species of fish.

Heater size should be approximately one watt for every litre of tank water.

## Adding fish - patience & time

Once the above steps have been completed, you are ready to start adding fish to your tank. Initially, it is best to purchase a small number of less-expensive, hardy fish as some may die in the first few weeks of set up. Remember it takes 2 - 3 months to establish a stable aquarium ecosystem, so be patient. Go directly home after purchasing your fish, as there is limited oxygen in the bag and water temperature will alter. Turn off the aquarium light.

Float the bag in the tank for 20 minutes before adding small amounts of aquarium water to the bag every 5 minutes.

Continue this for the next 20 - 30 minutes. Next, gently let the fish out of the bag to the tank. Finally, don't feed your fish for 24 hours, keep the light off and leave the fish alone to de-stress. You may begin to add more fish over the next few weeks as long as your fish are looking healthy and there is no ammonia or nitrite present.

It is ideal to wait up to 4 weeks before adding more fish from the initially completing your aquarium set up and first bag of fish.

## Feeding

Aim for two feeding sessions daily. Most people over-feed their fish, resulting in a poor tank environment. Each session, feed a small amount of food which should keep the fish feeding for 2-3 minutes in total. If the food is eaten in under 2 minutes, add a little more to ensure a full 3 minute feed in total. If you choose to feed once a day, please allow a full 5 minute feeding session. There should be no food left in the tank by the end of the session. Passion for Pets has a huge selection of top-quality fish food. Variety is the spice of life when it comes to feeding fish. For new aquariums, feed fish every second or third day for the first four weeks, to keep ammonia and nitrate levels down. The type of fish you choose to keep will also determine what feeding routines and food you will require, our staff will be more than happy to help you get it right.

## Algae Control

Ensure algae does not invade your tank by keeping it out of direct sunlight and only keeping the aquarium light on 8 - 10 hours a day. Any algae can be cleaned off the glass with various scrapers and wipes or an alga side if it's more stubborn.

## Maintaining your aquarium

**Weekly** - Perform a water chemistry test. Using a test kit, check pH, ammonia, nitrite and nitrate levels. Increased ammonia and nitrite may indicate over-feeding or problems with the biological filter. Tanks become acidic over time, resulting in a drop in pH, so this needs to be maintained. Regular checks allow you to catch problems early and save your fish from suffering.

**Fortnightly** - Perform a partial water change. As the aquarium is a closed environment, over time nitrates, organic acids and wastes accumulate in the water. The only way to prevent this becoming a problem is to perform a partial water change. Only change 25% - 30% of the water at one time, as any more will affect the biological filter.

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