

**HABITAT MAINTENANCE**

Water changes – change 20% of your water once a fortnight in an established tank. It is best to use a gravel syphon to do this as it can be used to vacuum your gravel; removing most of the waste material.

Clean the internal tank walls with a glass / acrylic specific cleaning pad so as not to scratch the sides, clean your ornaments in fresh water, tidy up your plants – pick off any brown leaves or decaying material. Top up with chlorine-free water or water that has been treated with a water conditioner.

Never completely clean out your whole tank – there are millions of beneficial bacteria which maintain the equilibrium of your tank's health. Check your filter and replace material as necessary but never all at once. There are packaged dormant bacterial agents which can be added to your tank to maintain its health. This is definitely a must-add when setting up a new tank or performing a water change.

Test your water's pH, ammonia and nitrates weekly initially and then fortnightly, or bring a sample into Petbarn and we will test it for you.

**FEEDING**

Due to the huge variety of tropical fish there is also a variety of available foods. There are three main categories of fish food, those for top swimmers, middle swimmers and bottom dwellers.

For optimum health it is best to feed a variety of high quality pelleted and frozen food. Defrost frozen foods prior to feeding.

Feeding quantities will vary but never more than they can consume within 3 - 5 minutes. Over feeding can cause a polluted, murky and lethal environment for your fish. Check the instructions on the packaged food that you purchase.

**MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST**

**DAILY**

- Perform a visual check and make sure fish are healthy and alert
- Check all equipment is working properly
- Remove any dead fish, plants or obvious debris

**FORTNIGHTLY**

- Perform 20% water change
- Clean glass
- Clean light tubes
- Test the water

**MONTHLY**

- Check supplies
- Perform filter maintenance

**The signs of an unhealthy fish are:**

- ▶ Gasping at the top of the tank
- ▶ Swimming abnormally
- ▶ Droopy, torn or frayed fins
- ▶ Lesions or cotton wool looking
- ▶ Substance on the body
- ▶ Safety

**These things can be dangerous for your fish:**

- ▶ Sharp edged ornaments
- ▶ Aerosols
- ▶ Metals
- ▶ Foreign objects from beaches and rivers
- ▶ Glass tapping
- ▶ Loud and sudden noises

Always wash your hands (and rinse well) before and after handling your tank contents.

**Did you know?** Using a test kit at home is the easiest way to monitor your aquarium's health, and keep your fish happy.

**Use this checklist to make sure that tropical fish are right for you and your family.**

- I have the appropriate sized tank that is required
- I understand that not all tropical species can be housed together
- I understand that some tropical species are schooling fish and need to be purchased and kept in numbers
- I can commit to spending up to ½ hour a day caring for my aquarium
- An adult can provide primary care for these pets

**ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING**

The tank is the most important aspect of tropical fish care. You need to provide a suitably sized environment for your fish. As species vary, you will need to ask a staff member for the appropriate sized tank for your choice of fish. Tropical fish live in warm water so obviously you will need a heater and thermometer for your tank. The other essential item is a good filtering system, this will help to maintain a healthy and safe environment. There are 3 types of filtration that every aquarium requires:

**Mechanical:** Mechanical filtration removes the larger floating particles from the water.

**Biological:** Biological filtration promotes and allows the growth of beneficial bacteria. This beneficial bacteria converts ammonia to nitrite and then converts nitrite to nitrate keeping your tank water healthy.

**Chemical:** Chemical filtration removes ammonia from the water. This is done by using such media as carbon, zeolite, and



ceramic rocks. Other environmental requirements are gravel, plants and places to hide – these can be ornaments, aquatic friendly rocks or driftwood. Pumps can also be used to assist in water aeration. These can be attached to an airstone to produce pretty little bubbles in your tank, although a good filter should suffice. Some aerated ornaments require an air pump. Lighting is necessary as it not only maintains a healthy day / night variation for your fish, but shows off your fish and helps to control the overgrowth of algae.

## TANK PLACEMENT

Place your tank in a draught free constant environment – one that doesn't have great increases or decreases of temperature. Don't place in direct sunlight, this can cause excessive growth of algae and can affect the heat of the water. Never use fly spray, air fragrance or other aerosols around your tank, these can be fatal to your fish.

Fish are startled by loud noises and vibrations; such as running feet or tapping on the outside of their tank. Place your tank somewhere it will be relatively undisturbed.

Make sure you set your tank up (on a stand) near a power supply and consider the floor or surface strength on which it will sit. Once you fill your tank with water and gravel it will weigh a great deal.

## QUARANTINE TANKS

A quarantine tank is highly recommended when you want to keep fish successfully. These can be relatively reasonable to set up and can save you money and heartache in fish losses. The tank capacity should be 20L to 50L and should be fitted with an internal filter and 50Watt heater. You should also use a separate fish net. There is no need for substrate but an ornament or plant to give security can be added. Your quarantine tank needs to be "cycled" as per your normal tank.

**Did you know?**

Adding StressZyme or Cycle will add beneficial bacteria to your aquarium.

