

AQUATIC SOLUTIONS - WHEN SNAILS SUDDENLY APPEAR



At some point or another, every aquarist has experienced an unexpected outbreak of snails in the home aquarium. It can be incredibly frustrating too. There are these small little animals in tremendous numbers that have seemingly appeared overnight, and you did not put them in the aquarium. Where did they come from?

The most common culprit for this sudden phenomenon is the Malaysian trumpet snail. This small snail is shaped like a cone and can rapidly reproduce with a single female giving birth to hundreds of miniature snails. The Malaysian Trumpet snail is nocturnal, and lives burrowed in the gravel, meaning that you generally do not see them. However, this type of snail does not eat plants and actually improves substrate health by burrowing into it and turning it over. They can also be successfully used to eat dead or rotting fish eggs from a spawn and are great for cleaning up any uneaten food.

Snails are incredibly resilient creatures. They can handle low temperatures, warm temperatures, foul water, medications, salt and even survive without water for a good time. They're tough. Ridding the aquarium of them, similarly, can be tough.

There's an old adage about an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure. Snails are not able to teleport, nor do they spontaneously arise from nowhere. If you have snails in your tank, you put them in there. The most common means is through adding live plants. Snails, or their eggs, can hitch hike on most types of plants and arrive in our home aquarium. Outbreaks generally occur due to over feeding. Excess uneaten food provides exactly what the snails need to reproduce in vast numbers.

The recommended way for getting rid of snails that are not wanted is to place your new plants in a new separate quarantine tank and observed for several weeks. Any snails that appear are picked off and crushed. This has added benefit of giving the aquarist an opportunity to be rid of other pesky hitch hikers (like planaria)

Snails can also be an interesting addition to the home aquarium. They're great algae eaters and scavengers and provide something a little different from fish. Many aquarists rightfully enjoy keeping snails in the home aquarium.

Another biological solution for snail infestations would be through the addition of clown loaches or Pakistani loaches that love to feast on snails (keep in mind these are a social species that should be kept in small groups and not by themselves)

Other chemical solutions are on the market which are generally copper based and can potentially cause more problems if dosed incorrectly or used with other species that cannot tolerate copper.

