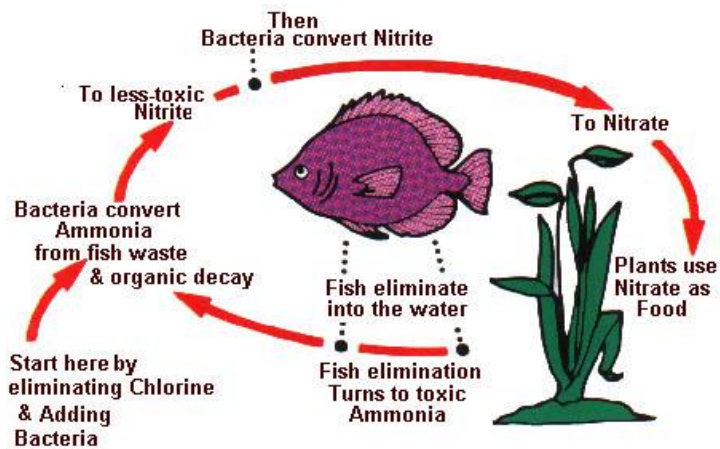


PISCES

PET EMPORIUM Freshwater Aquariums

Size: The type and quantity of livestock you want to care for, as well as available space suitable for the aquarium's placement, are important guiding factors when choosing an aquarium's dimensions. Whether it's a 3 gallon Betta tank or 300 gallons for your Cichlids, once established, larger tanks are more biologically stable than smaller ones. Glass is preferable to plastic for construction.



The Nitrogen Cycle

Placement & Set up: The stand on which you place your aquarium must be able to support the tank's total weight when filled. An average tank weighs approximately 10 lbs per gallon of tank space, and will need to be perfectly level, without any sides overhanging the stand support. Position the tank away from any sources of heat or direct sunlight, as it may contribute to excess algae growth. A glass top or plastic canopy is recommended to prevent excess evaporation and prevent fish from jumping out of the aquarium. Gravel or plant substrate is added to a depth of 1-3 inches, or approximately 1-2 lbs per gallon of water.

Filtration: All aquariums require a 3-stage filter to maintain water quality. The mechanical stage consists of materials such as sponges and/or filter floss to strain out debris accumulation. Change mechanical media as needed. The chemical stage consists of materials like carbon, zeo-lite, phosphate removers, and peat pellets. These products neutralize harmful substances in the water and are generally replaced every 4 weeks. The biological stage is the MOST IMPORTANT! Porous media like Bio Max provide surface area for the growth of beneficial bacteria, which break down waste products in the aquarium. These products need only partial replacement 2-4 times a year as excessive replacement or over cleaning will interfere with the tank's ability to continue cycling properly. (See Bio Cycle illustration above). By default, mechanical filtration materials and gravel will also support biological growth, and therefore should not be replaced at the same time as other filter media. **A new tank is biologically sterile when first set up and can take 4-6 weeks to become established. **Pisces recommends: Tank Buster and Step 2 nitrifying supplements** to boost bacteria.

Aeration: Adding an air pump helps oxygenate the water and will enhance the biological cycle by aiding circulation and gas exchange. Pick an aeration pump rated for your tank size. **Pisces recommends: Check valves to prevent water back siphoning into the air pump unit.**

Heaters: The recommended heater size ratio is 3-5 watts per gallon. Most tropical fish will need temperatures between 78 °F – 80 °F. Some Tetra species and Discus prefer temperatures between 80 °F and 86 °F. Goldfish, Fantails, and Koi are cold water fish, and therefore DO NOT need a heater. These species experience an increase in metabolism with increased heat, and generally rapidly reduce overall water quality when placed in a heated, tropical aquarium. Pisces recommends using two thermometers, on opposite ends of the tank, to make sure that the heater is adequately heating the entire tank.

Lighting: T5 high output full spectrum bulbs were once the industry's lighting standard for optimum plant growth; however, these have now been replaced with more efficient LED fixtures. If you only want good illumination for your non planted tank, then Fluval's Sky and Current USA's Satellite are good choices. Better illumination can be achieved for planted aquariums by using Fluval's Plant or Aqueon's planted aquarium lights. The best Hi-Tech lights go to the Kessil and Radion brands. Whether it's an LED bar like the Fluval Sky or a suspended Hi-Tech fixture like the Kessil, your light should span the entire length of the tank for optimum results.

Stocking of Fish & Plants: For most Tropical tanks, the recommended fish load is 1" of fish per gallon of water. For cold water species, the ideal ratio is 1" of fish per 3-5 gallons of water. With a new set up, do not add more than 30% of the tank capacity for the first addition, and wait 1-2 weeks then test the water before adding any more fish. Plants may be added any time, provided water quality, substrate, and lighting are sufficient for growth.

Feeding: Most adult fish only need a small feeding once per day. Excess feeding can result in a drastic reduction in water quality. Feed fish an assortment of flake, pellet and frozen foods to ensure a species appropriate, balanced diet.

Water Conditioners & Supplements: Essential products for a healthy aquarium include: **Peter's Step 1** tap water conditioner (removes chlorine/chloramines/heavy metals and replenish fishes' slime coat), **Peter's Step 2** biological boosters (provides beneficial bacteria to help maintain the ecological cycle), and **Peter's Step 3** waste breakdown/algae reducers (reduces solid waste build up, and compete for nutrients algae need to grow.) Aquarium Salt is also used as a tonic to boost fish health and reduce illness. The dosage is approximately 1 tsp per 1 gallon for maintenance purposes, added only during water replacements. **Pisces recommends: Peter's Tank Buster live nitrifying bacteria and Fish FX probiotic immune booster.**

Important Tips:

- NEVER use chlorinated (tap) water to clean your filters, decorations, or plants, as this will destroy the ecological balance in the tank. Use discard water from weekly water changes for this purpose.
- Remove 10-25% of the aquarium water every week and replace with fresh treated water. Less frequent, or larger changes (>50%) may disrupt the ecological balance. Topping up for evaporation does not count as water replacement, as waste matter and organic debris remain in the tank.
- If possible, de-chlorinate your tap water in a container separate from the aquarium, before adding to the tank. Add biological/waste control supplements after the tank is filled.
- Avoid using metal objects, seashells/coral, or found objects (such as garden rocks or wood) to decorate the aquarium, as these may leach out harmful substances.

Recommended Books: This care sheet is designed to provide you with some basic information on your new pet. To learn more about how to care for your pet, Pisces recommends: *The Natural Aquarium Handbook* by Barron's Books.

Recommended Supplies:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Water change bucket <input type="checkbox"/> Gravel vacuum <input type="checkbox"/> Heater <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Plant species books <input type="checkbox"/> Fish Net <input type="checkbox"/> Air pump and air stone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check valve <input type="checkbox"/> Water conditioners <input type="checkbox"/> Decorations, with suitable hiding spots. <input type="checkbox"/> Aquarium background <input type="checkbox"/> Aquarium Salt <input type="checkbox"/> Gravel or plant substrate <input type="checkbox"/> Plants (artificial or live) |
|--|--|

Your New Aquarium: It is the responsibility of any aquarist to provide their tank with regular maintenance to ensure optimum water quality and to prevent fish illness or loss.

Should you experience any problems with your new tank, please contact staff at Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you, but we cannot be held responsible for any fish or plant loss.

A tank is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Fish, plants and invertebrates should never be released into the wild.



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