Proper Selection and Care of New Fish

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

HEALTHY AQUARIUM FISH

For aquatic hobbyists, there's nothing more exhilarating than acquiring new fish for their aquarium. However, the excitement of finding a beautifully colored fish or an unusual specimen should never prompt a hasty, impulse purchase. Avoid common mistakes that result in unnecessary loss. Before you buy new fish, consider the following to help you make smart choices and ensure aquarium success.

SKINNY, RAGGED FINS

FACE DISCOLORATION

POOR COLORATION, STRESSED

RESEARCH

The thrill of purchasing a unique fish can cloud the judgment of even the most devoted hobbyist. Unless you are familiar with the care requirements of a fish, resist the urge to purchase. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Your questions demonstrate your dedication as a conscientious hobbyist and will be greatly appreciated. If you are not satisfied with the answers, take the initiative and find out the answers for yourself - put the fish on "hold" while you research the proper care requirements.

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Some basic information includes: scientific name, water parameter requirements, compatibility or temperament, dietary needs, and maximum adult size. The Internet is an invaluable research tool but be sure to rely on information from reputable sources such as educational websites or LiveAquaria.com, an excellent source for research information.

KNOW YOUR AQUARIUM

Every hobbyist should be familiar with the details of their aquarium. Information such as aquarium size (in gallons and dimensions), aquarium age, equipment or component list, inhabitant list (number and type of fish), water parameters, and medication use should be written down. Think of this list as a "profile" or "personal history" of your aquarium.

Keep a master list near your aquarium and make a copy to take with you whenever you go shopping for fish. This information provides valuable insight into your aquarium and helps simplify purchase decisions. Your aquarium setup will dictate what kind and how many fish you will be able to properly house. Be sure to update your list whenever you add new fish, upgrade equipment, or test water parameters.

QUARANTINE

Whenever possible, all new arrivals should be acclimated and introduced to a separate quarantine tank, even if they appear healthy. New fish are often stressed from transport and relocation. As a result, they are susceptible to any disease or parasite when introduced to a new aquarium. To protect new arrivals, as well as existing fish, isolate new fish for at least 2 to 3 weeks.

HEALTHY FISH SELECTION GUIDE

TO PICK OUT HEALTHY FISH, LOOK FOR FISH THAT:

- Are alert.
- Are active, but not hyperactive or skittish.
- Have clear eyes.
- Have full, but not bloated, stomachs.
- Have well-shaped fins that are in good condition.
- Are breathing steadily, without laboring to breathe.
- Appear clean and colorful without unnatural spots or excess slime.
- Demonstrate appetite and accept food during feeding.

Once you have made your purchase, be sure to get your fish home as quickly as possible. If you have a long drive home, ask the clerk to place the fish in a larger bag or request extra water in the bag.

The professionals at LiveAquaria.com will carefully select, package, and ship the healthiest, quality fish for your aquarium.

Q What is fish acclimation?

A: Fish acclimation is the gradual process of adjusting and matching water parameters of new arrivals to existing aquarium conditions. Such water parameters as temperature and water chemistry are slowly regulated so new fish become accustomed to water conditions found in their new homes. Proper fish acclimation is a crucial step to minimize fish stress. Read our step-by-step acclimation procedure.

During this period, monitor the health of your fish and pay particular attention to signs of illness. Also, make sure they are eating well. Quarantine tanks are auxiliary aquarium setups that allow new arrivals to regain their strength and acclimate to new conditions in a stress-free environment. Quarantine tanks are the best, long-term investment you'll make in the aquarium hobby. Read **Manage Fish Health with Quarantine Tanks** to learn more.

Keep these aquarium pointers in mind the next time you're at your local pet store. Be a knowledgeable hobbyist who makes wise purchasing decisions. You'll be pleasantly surprised how much time and money you save by dramatically reducing unnecessary fish loss.

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