

Stands & Canopies Selection Guide

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



With a little research and planning, the aquarium hobby can be an exciting and rewarding experience. There are endless possibilities and many different biotopes that can be created and enjoyed by the whole family in the comfort of your home.

Choosing the right stand

[Aquarium stands](#) are an integral part of the aquarium system. The stand serves the basic function of holding the aquarium in place, as well as concealing equipment and supplies below. There are two types of stands commonly available on the market, metal and wood.

[Metal aquarium stands](#) are durable and will generally be the most cost-effective choice when selecting a stand. While extremely functional, most metal stands do not offer any cabinetry for concealing equipment or additional storage. Metal aquarium stands are the workhorse of aquarium stands and have a very humble and "industrial" appearance.

If you are looking for decorative, furniture-like aquarium stands, then [wood stands](#) are your choice. Wood stands are available in a variety of styles and finishes, making it easy to find a model that will match the décor of your home or office. Wooden stands accommodate most filter configurations and have cabinetry to conceal bulky aquarium equipment. Many decorative models even include slide-out drawers to provide additional convenient storage.

Choosing the right canopy or hood

The [canopy or hood](#) serves many purposes other than just covering the aquarium. It is designed to cut down on evaporation, keep aquatic life from escaping the aquarium, and it houses or supports the [lighting system](#). There are three basic types of canopies; plastic, glass, and wood.

[Plastic hoods](#), which incorporate everything including the lighting system, are also referred to as full aquarium hoods. These models are very convenient since they provide a protective cover, a hinged lid for feeding, and a light fixture all in a single unit. They are a great choice but because of their fixed features, they provide the least amount of flexibility if you decide to upgrade your system in the future.

[Glass canopies](#) are the best choice for limiting evaporation and to keep jumping fish in the aquarium. They can be used by themselves or with a strip light placed on top. Glass canopies are versatile and allow the most flexibility in lighting types and configuration.

The last type of canopy is made from [wood](#), which is usually built to match the design of the stand. They are the most visually appealing canopies as well as the most expensive. The wood canopy is basically just a box that has been built to fit on top of the aquarium and is used to hide all of the lighting equipment. To limit the amount of evaporation from the aquarium, it is still necessary to use a glass canopy inside of the wooden frame. Using this style of canopy setup will give you the most options when it comes to designing custom lighting systems for both saltwater reef and freshwater planted aquariums. A retro-fit lighting system can be simply mounted to the top of the wooden canopy and holes can be drilled in the sides for installing [fans](#). For more powerful lighting systems, it is necessary to provide additional air circulation with cooling fans to dissipate the heat created by the bulbs.



When choosing the right canopy, the type of livestock that you are going to keep in the aquarium will also need to be taken into consideration prior to purchase. If you are not sure, or are thinking that you may switch the type of species you are going to keep in the future, a glass canopy is the best choice due to its versatility.