

Freshwater Invertebrates

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Diverse, interesting, and colorful, freshwater invertebrates are easy to care for, tolerate a diverse range of aquarium temperatures, and are available in all sorts of unique shapes and sizes.



Did you Know?

Invertebrates, which represent more than 95% of the known species on Earth, are animals without backbones.

Some are suited for aquariums as small as 10 gallons, and others boast colors so bright they can make your freshwater aquarium as vibrant as any marine aquarium.

Having a freshwater aquarium does not mean limiting yourself to just keeping fish. Consider freshwater invertebrates as an unusual addition to your home aquarium.

Freshwater invertebrates

When many people think of invertebrates and aquariums, they think of just snails. But there are many invertebrate species for your freshwater aquarium including freshwater lobsters, freshwater shrimp, ornamental snails, and freshwater clams.

Many freshwater invertebrates are also very functional, feeding on detritus (organic waste) and algae on the sides of your aquarium or scavenging the bottom for uneaten food and organic debris. That's why they're sometimes called a "cleanup crew," helping keep your aquarium clean, clear, and healthy.



Invertebrate care

Most inverts are omnivores and, as such, will eat plants or animals. They require clean, clear water, adequate oxygen, stable water flows, and a steady source of [food](#). Temperaments of inverts range from peaceful to semi-aggressive and should not pose a problem when housed properly with appropriate tank mates. For example, avoid putting ornamental snails in planted aquariums, since they will more than likely eat your aquascape!



Special concerns

Keep in mind that even peaceful inverts can become aggressive under certain circumstances. Conditions that could cause aggression include being stressed, a dirty aquarium, or if they are not fed correctly. However, if you care for your inverts and their aquariums properly, the chance for potential problems decreases.

Invertebrates are not only sensitive to water quality, they are also vulnerable to medications you might give your fish. They are exceedingly sensitive to copper or copper derivatives (like malachite green) that you might put into your aquarium to fight fish parasites or disease.



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Two of our favorite inverts

Two particularly colorful inverts that you might consider are the Singapore Flower Shrimp and the Hammers Cobalt Blue Lobster.

[Singapore Flower Shrimp](#) come from the fast-moving rivers and streams of continental Asia. They are able to change color rapidly, ranging from tan to dark brown and, at times, even a bright red. They are one of the larger freshwater shrimp attaining a maximum size of 3-1/2 inches. Their front six legs have fan-like appendages used to filter water for food. Singapore Flower Shrimp will add a new dimension to your



peaceful, freshwater aquarium.

An established freshwater aquarium of at least 20 gallons, with plenty of hiding places and mature substrate, are the ideal setup for the Singapore Flower Shrimp. They should be housed with peaceful fish that do not consider them a food source.



[Hammers Cobalt Blue Lobsters](#) are brilliant blue, which intensifies as the invertebrates mature. Because of their selective breeding, they will not lose their coloration, except in times of stress. They stay relatively small in the aquarium, only attaining a total length of 5 inches.



Provide a freshwater aquarium of at least 20 gallons with plenty of rocks, and a substrate with a moderate grain size or finer, for the Hammers Cobalt Blue Lobsters to burrow. They are territorial towards their own kind, and a larger aquarium will be needed if housing more than one. Provide at least 20 gallons per lobster and include plenty of rocks and plants for cover.

The Hammers Cobalt Blue Lobsters are generally peaceful. They typically will not bother top and mid level swimmers, but exercise caution when keeping them with bottom dwellers such as loaches and catfish.

