A Closer Look at Nano Reef Aquariums

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It's easy to see why nano reef aquariums are so popular. Who wouldn't want a tiny portion of the ocean sitting on their desk? Especially when it costs a fraction of what larger reef systems cost. A nano reef delivers endless fascination, from the saunter of its careful invertebrates to the abrupt retreat of its bashful fish. Every alcove contains a hidden wonder. For seasoned hobbyists, a nano reef offers an exciting challenge with beautiful rewards for home or office. If you're thinking about a nano reef, consider the following for nano reef success.

Q A

Why are nano reef aquariums so fragile?

Many organisms that live on or around natural reefs are specialized. They evolved to thrive in the specific environmental conditions of a reef. To be successful at reef keeping, all of these conditions must be recreated in the extremely small environment of an aquarium.

Miniature Reefs

In the most practical sense, all home reef aquariums are miniature reefs when compared to expansive natural reefs. However, the term "nano reef" generally refers to a miniature reef system that is typically 30 gallons or less, housing corals, invertebrates, and perhaps a few fish. That's a lot of complexity in a small space.

What thrives on a nano reef?

Specimens characteristic of a nano reef include Polyp Corals and Soft Corals like Cabbage Leather, Thin Finger Leather, and Tree Corals. Mushroom Corals are also appropriate, such as green-striped, lavender, and bull's-eye. If you choose to have fish in your nano reef aquarium, small fish species such as gobies, firefish, and blennies are suitable in the nano environment.

Nano system specimens must be chosen carefully to avoid overcrowding. Small fish, with maximum adult size of only a few inches, are the best choices. They must be introduced slowly, only a few fish at a time over a period of several weeks. With Soft Corals and Polyp Corals, select species that tend to grow slowly. Fast-growing species will take over your limited

HOW DO I GET STARTED

In an enclosed ecosystem like the nano reef, everything is amplified - the amazement, the wonder, and also the management. Observe daily, test often, and always remedy the problems you discover within the same day.

- **Select a nano reef aquarium kit** - Leading aquarium manufacturers now offer technologically advanced kits that include an aquarium with the filtration and lighting built in, such as the **Nano Cube**. These systems have been designed to provide the appropriate type and amount of lighting, as well as the advanced filtration required to

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aquarium space and may even overtake less hardy species.

Looks easy, but is it?

The modest size of a nano reef aquarium gives an impression of effortless maintenance. In reality, the challenges of a marine reef setup in such a confined space make a nano reef a delicate undertaking, best-suited for an experienced or dedicated hobbyist. The reason is simple. These small aquariums are more susceptible to changes in water quality and temperature because they contain a smaller volume of water. When water-quality issues or temperature fluctuations occur, they can progress quickly to place great stress on the system and can ultimately result in failure.

stay on top of waste buildup. "Nano" products such as the **Mini-Jet Pump** offer crucial supplemental water movement and filtration to maintain ideal nano reef conditions.

- **Use live rock and/or live sand** to supplement and foster natural biological filtration. They also give invertebrates and fish a place to burrow and hide and provide necessary nutrients.
- **Daily observation and testing** - **Daily testing** lets you detect and remedy any problems you discover right away before they become disastrous.
- **Perform small water changes (about 10-20%) weekly** to help maintain good water quality. To avoid nuisance algae and to keep your fish healthy and stress-free, change your filter media according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

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