Aquascaping Saltwater Aquariums

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GIVE A LIFT TO YOUR MARINE AQUARIUM

Aquascape!

ypically, marine aquariums are bare bones - literally, since the sole decoration in some of them are coral skeletons. But why not enhance your fishes' experience - and yours - with the addition of new marine decorations? Realistic artificial corals, live rock, and more are favorites of the modern marine hobbyist.

I am not sure how to decorate my marine aquarium because I am afraid it won't be to my liking. What can I do?

A. Start with a diagram of your aquarium, drawn to scale, with everything you want to incorporate as aquarium décor. By doing so, you will get a good sense of how your aquarium will look, but more importantly, you will know what type of decorations you will need, as well as the quantity.

MODERN MARINE-SCAPING

In the recent past, decoration choices for marine hobbyists have been limited. What was available in terms of aquarium decorations focused primarily on the needs of freshwater aquarium hobbyists. However, as the popularity of saltwater aquariums steadily increases, the aquarium industry has realized a need for more decorations for saltwater hobbyists. The new generation of marine aquarium decorations boasts greater variety and realism, higher quality, and a new environmentally-friendly philosophy.

GREATER VARIETY AND REALISM

Marine decorations now include macroalgae, soft and hard corals, barnacles, starfish, sponges, and even live rock. This variety allows beautiful and imaginative aquarium displays sure to rival any reef aquarium with live specimens. The degree of realism has also increased to feature amazing detail and vibrant color gradations. The new generation of marine decorations is more accurately described as quality replicas than simple décor.

HIGHER QUALITY

The marine aquarium environment poses several unique challenges. For example, harsh saltwater conditions often accelerated corrosion or fading of past aquarium decorations. However, new marine decorations rely on materials that resist corrosion for long lasting aquarium enhancement. Many are made of high-grade polyurethane and are UV color stabilized so they won't fade, corrode, or release harmful chemicals.

ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY OPTION

Many marine aquarists love the look of live corals but may not have the time or equipment to properly care for them. Artificial corals are the sensible solution for the environment and the hobbyist. The use of artificial corals and other reef décor reduces pressure on live corals and allows marine hobbyists of all experience levels to enjoy corals without fear of unexpected losses. Imagine a "thriving" coral display that does not require special conditioners, supplements, or lighting. With minimal expense and maintenance, artificial corals will outlast their living counterparts and play a vital role in reef conservation.

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AQUASCAPING TIPS

Research your fish - see if you can duplicate their natural environment for a more successful marine aquascape.

Choose shapes that offer plenty of hiding places for shy marine creatures.

Be sure to clean all decorations with water **(no soap)** before adding them to your aquarium.

Avoid found items - even those directly from the sea may contain contaminants you don't want in your aquarium.

Start off as simple as possible. Choose a theme, to keep your aquarium from looking disorganized.

Think outside the box. Aquascaping is a creative process and is a reflection of your personality. Don't be afraid to create a fantastic aquascape with sunken galleons or masks. Pair with an "active" volcano for an eye-catching display that will please hobbyists of all ages.

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