Goldfish Keeping

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Many aquarists remember their first attempts at the hobby as a child, eagerly overfeeding a bright orange goldfish in a bare small bowl with colored marbles on the bottom. When the fish floated belly up - usually in weeks or months - the moral our parents taught us was more about the cycle of life than the nitrogen cycle.

It's a myth that you can successfully keep goldfish in a bowl. As adult hobbyists returning to this challenging species, it's easy to spot our mistakes: goldfish produce many times more ammonia than other fish of equal proportion, and therefore require a filtered aquarium which can deal with their waste effectively.

Given the proper care, environment, and conditions, goldfish can live for over a decade. No matter what variety, the Fancy Goldfish is sure to add color and beauty to any aquarium or water garden. If you're up for a unique challenge unlike tropical or marine fish keeping, the rewards of these ornamental beauties will be golden.

Tips for keeping healthy goldfish:

Space: Goldfish demand large volumes of water: 20 gallons for one fish and 10 gallons per each additional goldfish.

Water Quality: The more filtration, the better. For best results, use all three filtration methods: mechanical, biological, and chemical. Regular water testing and frequent partial water changes are also essential for managing the ammonia levels goldfish produce.

Aeration: Goldfish require a maximum amount of dissolved oxygen, so use an aerating power filter or Bubble Disk connected to an air pump.

Temperature: Because goldfish can withstand a wide variety of temperatures, they will adapt to most room temperatures. However, it is recommended to use a heater for stability, as wildly fluctuating temperatures can lead to a goldfish's demise.

FANCY GOLDFISH

The term "Fancy Goldfish" refers to members of the Goldfish family specifically bred to enhance certain colors or body characteristics, such as the tail or head shape. Goldfish are members of the carp family (*Cyprinidae*) which includes more native members of freshwater fish in the northern hemisphere than any other group.

Varieties of Fancy Goldfish include the Fantail or Ryukin, Veiltail, Globe-eye, Celestial, Bubble-eye or Toadhead, Pearlscale, Pompom, Lionhead or Ranchu, Black Moor, and Oranda. Each variety may share commonalities with other varieties but generally has at least one characteristic that sets it apart.

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