

4 Easy Aquarium Setups

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

When planning your next aquarium, consider staying "true to nature" by building and stocking a miniature ecosystem of common structure, inhabitants, and plants that exist together in the wild. By staying true to the subtle and complex relationships found in regional ecosystems, or biotopes, you'll enjoy the chance to witness the natural behaviors of fish and invertebrates that are at ease in their surroundings. You'll also find it easier to maintain a healthy system by maintaining the ideal water parameters for your biotope of choice, because all the life in your aquarium share a common temperature zone, pH range, and available diet.

Give your next aquarium venture a head start with a theme from nature. Here are four popular examples using fish, plants, and structures that are readily available to hobbyists:

Cool Water Aquarium

Care Level: Easy

Replicating a river or lake in a northern Asian climate, this setup is recommended for the new hobbyist. The inhabitants in this setup are hardy, undemanding, and prefer water temperatures in the range of 64-75°F.

Suitable Fish:	Recommended Plants:	Structure:
<u>Zebra Danio</u> <u>Turquoise Danio</u> <u>Golden White Cloud</u>	<u>Anacharis</u> <u>Hornwort</u> <u>ChainSword - Narrow Leaf</u>	<u>Driftwood</u> <u>Natural Gravel</u> Slate-like Stones

Southeast Asian Tropical

Care Level: Easy/Intermediate

Plant this setup heavily, because its inhabitants love the thick dense cover of a backwater, slow-moving flowage. Use strong

lighting to create a "shallow water under direct sun" effect, and keep the pH levels slightly lower - the tannins in the driftwood will help naturally.

Suitable Fish:	Recommended Plants:	Structure:
<u>Rasboras</u> <u>Dwarf Gourami</u> <u>Kuhli Loach</u> <u>Chinese Algae Eater</u>	<u>Ludwigia - Broad</u> <u>Cryptocoryne</u> <u>Rotala Indica</u>	<u>Driftwood</u> <u>Eco-Complete Plant Substrate</u>

South American River

Care Level: Intermediate

One of the most popular motifs, this biotope features some of the most striking fish coloration and behavior. To replicate the dark, tea-stained waters of the Amazon, we recommend Blackwater Extract and Peat Media, along with the structure listed below. Rams and Dwarf Cichlids are fussy about water quality, so test and refresh often to ensure their good health.

Suitable Fish:	Recommended Plants:	Structure:
<u>Bleeding Heart Tetra</u> <u>Glowlight or Neon Tetras</u> <u>German Blue Ram</u> <u>Dwarf Cichlids</u> <u>Cory Cats</u> <u>Plecos</u>	<u>Anubias Nana</u> <u>Brazilian Sword</u> <u>Java Fern</u> <u>Java Moss</u>	<u>Eco-Complete Plant Substrate</u> <u>Smooth Stones</u>

Nano-Reef

Care Level: Intermediate/Advanced

The challenges of a marine setup in such a confined space make Nano-Reefs more suitable to the seasoned hobbyist, but the rewards are fascinating. This is one aquarium which really draws you in to view every nook

and cranny of live rock, where tiny invertebrates crawl and sleek gobies hide. We're pleased to offer [Nano Live Rock](#) which is sized just right for exotic miniature reefs, created within 12-gallon systems like the [Nano Cube](#).

Suitable Aquatic Life:	Structure:	Recommended Products:
<p><u>Corals:</u> Colony Polyps Soft Corals Mushroom Corals</p> <p><u>Livestock:</u> Hawaiian Feather Duster Blood Red Fire Shrimp Pistol Shrimp Bumble Bee Snails</p>	<p>Live Rock</p>	<p>LiveAquaria® Professional Reef Salt Refractometer Phytoplankton</p>