

Saltwater Aquariums and Aquarium Algae-Prevention

Anyone who has had an aquarium knows that algae is unavoidable. It is just one of the things that fish owners, both salt and freshwater, have to deal with on a regular basis.

There are four main variety's of algae; green algae, brown algae, red-brush algae, and blue green algae.

Green algae is the variety of algae that most people are familiar with. Green algae thrives in any aquarium that receives an abundance of light. The two most commonly seen green algae in aquariums are hair algae and hard "green dot algae". Hair algae are long wispy strands of algae that are easily cleaned from the tank. The green-dot algae appears as green dots of algae on the side of the aquarium, it is very difficult and time consuming to remove green dot algae.

It is common for brown algae to appear when a tank that has just been started. It typically puts in an appearance within the first two weeks. Its appearance in established tanks means that the aquarium owner needs to test the nitrate and phosphate levels of this tank. Brown algae is unusual because it thrives in aquariums that do not receive a great deal of light. When brown algae appears in the tank the aquarium owner needs to clean the entire tank and increase the lighting. It is not unusual for brown algae to disappear when the tank conditions stabilize.

Red-brush algae is a variety of algae that loves aquariums that have a high PH. It is incredibly difficult to manually remove red-brush algae from aquariums.

Blue-green algae is deceptive because it's not an algae at all. It is really a cyanobacteria. When it appears in the aquarium it looks like a slime that is taking over the tank. Blue-green algae can be fatal to aquarium plants and can jeopardize the health of the fish.

There are many ways you can discourage the growth of algae in your saltwater tanks.

One of the simplest ways to limit the amount of algae in your saltwater tank is to reduce your lighting. Leaving your aquarium lights on for less than nine hours a day will limit the amount of time algae has to photosynthesis. Use the lowest wattage possible.

Use distilled water whenever you clean your saltwater aquarium or change the water. Changing your water every two to three weeks will limit the amount of

time algae can grow in your tank. When you change the water make sure you vacuum your rocks. Also keep the use of additives to a minimum. Change your prefilter pad weekly.

Stock your tank with algae eating fish. In saltwater tanks this will be; hard star fish, Yellow Tang fish, Blennies, Turbo snails, Angel fish, and small Hermit Crabs.

Purchase the largest, strongest algae glass cleaning magnet you can find and then use it. If you use the magnet each and every time you clean the water your tank the glass on your tank should stay algae free. Be sure to clean the magnet after each use. For particularly stubborn algae spots, you will have to use a razor blade. Don't forget to clean the overflow pipes.