

Tips on Aquarium Care and Cleaning

The proper care and cleaning of your aquarium is the most important, yet most overlooked aspect of owning an aquarium. By avoiding the care and maintenance of a fish tank, not only will it lose the visual appeal, but your fish will be unhealthy and unhappy. By following a daily, weekly and monthly care program, you will maintain a beautiful, clean and healthy aquarium.

Daily Cleaning Routine

To maintain a clean aquarium, there are some daily tasks that must be done. First and foremost, it's important to check the temperature of the tank and make sure it stays consistent. For tropical freshwater fish, the temperature should average at around 77 degrees. Too much heat in your aquarium will promote the growth of algae. Always check for sick or dead fish daily. If you have a sick fish, it should be removed from the tank immediately or it may harm the other inhabitants of the aquarium. Lastly, check that the pump and filter are functioning properly.

Weekly Cleaning Routine

Weekly maintenance is necessary to keep the tank healthy. On a weekly basis, any waste should be removed from the surface of the gravel at the bottom of the tank. Using a siphon tube will accomplish this. If water is removed during this process, be sure to replace it and keep the water in the tank at the same level. Add chemicals and chlorine weekly so the balance within the tank remains the same. At this time, it is best to test the water for the ammonia and nitrate levels. Don't overlook testing the pH of the water as well. If you are raising live plants, tend to them each week. Trim them back if they are getting too big, and remove any dead or sick leaves. Re-anchor and new sprouts into your gravel. Also, check your tank for snails. You can remove snails by floating a piece of lettuce leaf in the tank. The snails will be attracted to the lettuce, and you can remove them using a net.

Monthly Cleaning Routine

Finally, some monthly steps will assure that your aquarium stays clean and healthy. A partial water change should be performed each month. Using a siphon hose, remove 20 to 25 percent of the water from the tank. Always make sure that your chemical balance is correct. High levels of chlorine and ammonia will cause death. Cleaning the filter should be a monthly task as well as changing the filter cartridge. Be sure not to clean the filter too thoroughly as it contains helpful bacteria that aids in stabilizing the chemical balance in the tank. During the monthly cleaning, scrape and remove all algae from the surface of the tank. If you find you are having a significant amount of algae, consider adding an algae eater to the tank. Should you already have one, be sure to keep an eye

on the temperature of the tank and you may also want to limit the time in which a light is used. Any increased heat source will speed up the production of algae inside the aquarium. If your tank is located in direct sunlight and you are having an algae problem, it is best to relocate the tank.

By following a maintenance schedule, you will be sure to keep a clean, clear and healthy tank. Aquarium care is essential and must be performed regularly to ensure the long and happy life of your fish. Provide yourself with an aquarium to be proud of by keeping up with the care and cleaning.