

TROPICAL FISH CARE SHEET

Species in this group are sourced from Tropical regions throughout the world, for this reason they are best kept in heated aquariums. This group covers a large range of species and consists of many weird and wonderful species such as Mollies, Platys, Swordtails, Angel Fish, Tetras, and Barbs.

Due to the wide range of species it is hard to make generalisations as to the keeping conditions and diet. However, most species are suited to a temperature of 72– 82° F, a pH of 6.5 – 7.0 and general hardness of 50 – 100ppm. Many larger species will be aggressive or predatory and may not be suited for community tanks. The majority of the smaller species are well suited to community tanks.

Angel Fish

General Information

The unique shape and majestic, calm, swimming style of angel fish are just some of the reasons why this fish is one of the most popular of all aquarium fish. Angelfish are laterally compressed and look like a disc on edge with long fins coming out of the top and bottom with 2 'feelers' in front of the anal fin. Angels have been selective bred, resulting in a large range of color forms in both normal as well as longfin varieties. Angels are best kept in pairs or better still, small schools. Angels are generally peaceful however larger mature specimens may eat smaller fish such as neons.

Maximum Size

Up to 14cm.

Water Quality

Temperature: 77°F — 84°F

PH: 6.5 — 7.0

General Hardness: 50 — 150ppm

Coloration and Varieties

The eye is usually dark red, however many color strains now have black eyes. The wild form body color is silvery-white with 4 dark vertical bars running through it. Many color strains have been developed by fish breeders around the world with blue, gold, marble, koi, blacks and other color variations now available. Angels have been selectively bred for their scale patterning. For example, the Pearlscale or Diamond Angel have very attractive diamond-like scales.

Tank Setup

Angels do best in a deep tank of at least 16 Inches high to accommodate their tail shape. Dark colored backgrounds and gravel enable their fine colours to show through to their fullest extent.

Ensure water conditions are set accordingly to the desired ranges for the angelfish and they appreciate a well-planted tank with lots of open swimming space.

Feeding

Will eat most aquarium fish foods but they will thrive and be much more apt to breed on a greatly varied diet including some live, frozen or fresh food occasionally. Small size angels, at about 1 - 2 inches are still considered fry and require several feeds a day to keep them healthy and growing.

Barb

General Information

Barbs belong to the Family Cyprinidae which is one of the largest fish Family's in the world, and contains more than 2,600 species. The Family consists of a number of important groups of ornamental fish including Goldfish, Loaches, Rasboras and Sharks. Barbs have been selectively bred to emphasise bright color combinations.

Natural Range

Southern (Sri Lanka) and Eastern Asia, with a few from Africa. Their natural environment varies from fast flowing streams and rivers to calmer lake environments. Many species also prefer shaded areas with aquatic plants.

Maximum Size

Barbs come in a wide variety of sizes ranging from just a few centimetres for the Rosy barb (*Puntius conchonius*) to the monstrous 35cm for the Tinfoil Barb (*Barbus schwanenfeldi*) making their diversity very impressive.

Water Quality

Barbs are not fussy about their water conditions and they will thrive in parameters such as:

Temperature: 65°F – 79°F

PH: 6.5 – 7.5

General Hardness: 50 – 150 ppm

Feeding

They are omnivorous and will thrive on live, frozen and dry food. It is also a good idea to provide some vegetable matter as well.

Compatibility

Barbs are hardy, active and mostly a peaceful fish that are best kept in groups in a community tank. Tiger Barbs are known to nip at fins therefore it is best not to keep them with long finned fish and with small slow moving fish. Provide enough fish to school (5-8 Barbs) and the fin nipping tendency will be lessened.

Color and Varieties

Barbs have been selectively bred to emphasise color bright color combinations. This group of fish includes popular fish like Rosy Barbs, Moss Green Tiger Barbs, Black Ruby Barb, Tiger Barbs, Checker Barbs, Cherry Barbs and Diamond Scale Barbs.

Sexing and breeding

Male barbs are generally slender in shape and more brightly colored than females. Females are also recognised by their fuller abdomen particularly when in spawning condition. Barbs will readily breed in captivity. For breeding, a separate densely planted tank should be set up and the adults should be removed as Barbs do not engage in brood care after laying their eggs. Most male barbs change color during breeding.

Housing

The tank set up should avoid bright lights as a moderate amount of light will bring out the best colors on them more effectively. Secondly provide a lot of swimming space and hiding places for these active fish. Barbs are undemanding and will be a stunning addition to your home aquarium.

Tetra

General Information

Tetras are the most common type of fish found in South America after catfish. Their name is commonly used for a large group of fish characterised by the presence of a small adipose fin between their dorsal and caudal fin. The term Tetra is actually not a taxonomic grouping, as many unrelated fishes from differing families have been commonly called Tetras. Tetras are the second most commonly kept fish in community tank setups, after livebearers. They are popular because of their vibrant colors, manageable size, mild behaviour and schooling habits.

Natural Range

These species originate from subtropical and tropical areas of Africa and South America, typically from tropical rainforest rivers and streams. Their origin stems back to when the African and South American continents were joined in one land mass.

Maximum Size and Longevity

Range from 2 – 12cm depending on species. Longevity ranges from around 1 year for some small species to several years.

Water Quality

The aquarium conditions required by these fish depend on their location of origin and cannot be generically listed. However, most Tetras purchased at Brother's Pets are of South American origin and will do well in water that is soft and slightly acidic.

Temperature: 72°F – 79°F

PH: 6 – 7.0

General Hardness: 50 – 150 ppm

Feeding

Many Tetras are omnivorous and will readily take most types of aquarium foods used in the hobby. Due to the small size of many species, ensure that food particles are not too large for their small mouths. We recommend feeding a small dry pellet or flake in conjunction with Frozen Brine Shrimp to provide a balanced diet.

Compatibility

Tetras are best kept in large schools (minimum 6 in the group) and different species can generally be kept together with few problems. Tetras will also mix readily with a range of species and are generally an ideal community fish – however as many species are relatively small, it is not a good idea to mix them with species that grow large such as Oscars. Some species can be prone to eating aquatic plants.

Color and Varieties

Many species tend to have a silver colored background to their body over which splashes of iridescent colors occur. There are a huge variety of colors such as the iridescent red and blues of Neon and Cardinal Tetras. The fins of many species also contain various colors and patterns. Today there are many species of commercially farmed Tetras that have different color morphs (generally Albino or golden forms) or fins (long or short finned varieties).

Sexing

Many species show no sexual dimorphism at all making sexing of the fish difficult. As is common with most species, females carrying eggs can often be seen as fish with a distended abdominal area. However, in some species traits such as longer fins, more elaborate colors or patterns and size differences can be used to tell male from female. Tank breeding of Tetras is often

problematic due to their particular needs for water quality; however, many advanced hobbyists are able to breed most of the common species. Most commercial Tetra species are now farmed throughout Asia and even in indoor facilities in Europe, USA and Australia.

Guppy

General Information

This species belongs to the Livebearing Tooth Carp Family or Poeciliidae. Guppies are probably the most popular livebearer among both aquarium owners and advanced breeders. The once humble guppy has become a sought after fish for hobbyists with selective breeding resulting in a wide variety of colors and fin shapes. These fish are generally robust and can tolerate a wide range of aquarium conditions and for this reason they are often recommended for beginners. However, because of intense selective breeding, fancy guppies can be harder to maintain than their wild ancestors. For this reason it is important to try and maintain water which is slightly hard and alkaline otherwise they can become prone to bacterial infections. Guppies are available in a wide variety of colors and they are very active.

Natural Range

Guppies originate from South America and the West Indies, but nearly all guppies sold in the U.S. today are bred in Asia.

Maximum Size and Longevity

Sizes can range from 3 – 5cm.

Water Quality

Temperature: 75°F—79°F

PH: 7.0—7.5

General Hardness: 250—300ppm

Guppies need clean oxygen rich water, ensure tanks are well aerated and filters are cleaned regularly. Make sure all biological filters are working properly, ensuring no ammonia or nitrite is present. For more information please refer to our care sheet 'Tank Cycling'.

Feeding

An active fish, guppies use an enormous amount of energy and need to be fed at least 3 times a day, with a variety of foods including dry, fresh, frozen or live foods. Guppies are top feeders and will readily take most prepared foods.

Compatibility

Guppies are suited to a densely planted community tank with other peaceful fish. It is best to choose tank mates with similar water requirements - slightly alkaline hard water in their aquarium. Avoid stocking with larger or aggressive species which will nip at them because of their brightly colored tails. Male guppies may continuously 'harass' female guppies if kept together, a ratio of one male to two females will reduce stress.

Colors and Varieties

While there are many beautiful wild forms of livebearers, guppies have been selectively bred throughout the world to produce a huge variety of colors, body shapes and fin arrangements.

Sexing

Livebearers have the common trait that they give birth to free swimming young (ovoviparous), instead of egg laying like most other fishes. To achieve this, male livebearers have a modified anal fin called a gonopodium that is used to facilitate internal fertilization of the female. Once

fertilised, the eggs mature inside the oviduct of the mother. The eggs then hatch internally and she will give 'birth' to the resultant offspring soon after. The fry of guppies are about 7 to 10mm in length when born and are probably the most easily raised species as they will feed on finely ground dry foods and do not require smaller live foods like most other species. Males and females are generally easily distinguished as males have a smaller body with brightly coloured tails, with females also having a dark 'gravid' spot in the anal region.

Molly

General Information

Mollies also known as *Poecilia sphenops* is a species of fish, of the genus *Poecilia*; to distinguish it from its congeners, it is sometimes called short-finned Molly or common Molly.

They inhabit fresh water streams and coastal brackish and marine waters of Mexico to Colombia. The wild-type fish are a dull silvery color, often sprinkled black all over. The common Molly can produce fertile hybrids with many *Poecilia* species, most importantly the sailfin molly. The male black mollies generally tend to be mildly aggressive. Mollies rank as one of the most popular feeder fish due to high growth rate, birth size, reproduction, and brood number.

Natural Range

From Mexico to Colombia

Maximum Size and Longevity

Up to 6cm

Water Quality

Temperature: 72°F - 79°F.

PH: 7.0—8.0

General Hardness: 200—300 ppm.

Feeding

The Molly will accept any aquarium food, but in order to maintain top condition it does require some vegetable matter. They will also eat algae which they will find for themselves by constantly grazing on plants or other surfaces in the aquarium.

Compatibility

The Molly is extremely peaceful, and makes an ideal community fish but the male black Mollies generally tend to be mildly aggressive.

Colors and Varieties

Part of the Molly's appeal lies in its attractive colors. They can come in Gold, Silver, Black, Dalmation, Red, Green, Chocolate, Orange, and White (platinum). The Balloon Molly is named so because they have a shorter, deeper body than normal Mollies. The Lyretail Molly has a beautiful "Lyre" shaped tail, while the Sailfin Molly has a highly developed top fin.

Sexing

Sexing Mollies is easily done. They sex the same way as most common livebearers that you will run across. It's all in the shape of the anal fin, the one right next to where the fish eliminates its waste. That fin shape is called a gonopodium, that is a large dorsal fin with small round light spots for display purposes and is used much like the sex organ of a mammal to impregnate the female. Female is larger and rounder bellied.

Platy

General Information

Platys are peaceful, hardy, active and very colorful. In numbers they can effectively brighten up a dull, drab tank. They have a very inquisitive personality, and will explore all levels of the tank.

They are also suited to Nano Tanks.

Maximum Size

Commonly around 4 – 6 cm in length, with females occasionally growing a little larger, up to a maximum of 8cm.

Water Quality

Temperature: 75°F - 80°F.

PH: 7.0—8.0

General Hardness: 200—300 ppm.

They prefer slightly alkaline water, but are generally able to tolerate a wide range of water qualities and quite hardy.

Coloration

The species has many color varieties – red, black, blue, yellow, wagtail, tuxedo, neon, mickey-mouse and many more.

Tank Set-Up

An easily cared for fish that does well in all types of community aquaria. Give them a fairly large tank with live plants and open swimming areas. Avoid too much driftwood, because as a rule livebearers do not like acidic water. Although not a schooling fish they benefit by being kept with a large number of their own kind.

Feeding

Platys will eat most aquarium fish food and also graze on any algae growing within the aquarium. They will benefit from a varied diet. They can also be kept in ponds outdoors (in warmer weather, only in summertime here in the midwest) to control mosquito levels and algae levels.

Compatibility

Platys are one of the best community tank species and will mix well with other community species.

Sexing

Sexing Platys is easily done. They sex the same way as most common livebearers that you will run across. It's all in the shape of the anal fin, the one right next to where the fish eliminates its waste. That fin shape is called a gonopodium, that is a large dorsal fin with small round light spots for display purposes and is used much like the sex organ of a mammal to impregnate the female. Females are larger and rounder bellied.

Swordtails

General Information

The Swordtail comes in many different colors with the males being easily identified by their signature sword like tail. The Swordtail is an extremely hardy fish that can adapt to a wide range of water conditions. Some hobbyists have reported problems with aggression among male swordtails when keeping multiples. It may be a good idea to limit the number of male swordtails in your tank. A good mix may be three females to one male.

Natural Range

Swordtails are native to Mexico to Guatemala

Maximum Size and Longevity

Swordtails can grow up to 13cm.

Water Quality

Temperature: 72°F — 80°F

PH: 7.0 — 7.8

General Hardness: 200 — 300 ppm

Feeding

Swordtails are omnivorous surface feeders with a large appetite. They will eat most aquarium fish foods and also graze on any algae growing within the aquarium. We suggest feeding a mix of flakes or pellets with ingredients like spirulina to help provide the necessary nutrients to aid in optimum growth and health. The fry are easy to raise due to their larger size when compared to egg laying species, approximately 7 to 10mm in length when born. They will feed on finely ground dry foods.

Compatibility

Swordtails are generally suitable for keeping in community tanks with other medium sized fish. It should be noted that when they are fully grown they can be very active and may out-compete some smaller or less active species for food. Some adult Swordtails can be aggressive and develop the habit of fin nipping.

Color and Varieties

Wild Swordtails are generally a dull green color with a small extension to the tail fin. Selective breeding has produced a vast array of color variations such as red, tuxedo, albino, green, red and white and numerous other colorations. The 'sword' extension of the tail of male fish has also been greatly enhanced in selectively bred fish, and more recently more elaborate fins has been developed such as Hi- Fin and Lyretails.

Sexing

Mature male swordtails are easily identified by the long sword-like extension to their tail. The females also have a dark spot near the anus called the gravid spot – this is the area in which the fry develop before being born. Livebearers have the common trait that they give birth to free swimming young (ovoviparous), instead of egg laying like most other fishes. To achieve this, male livebearers have a modified anal fin called a gonopodium that is used to facilitate internal fertilization of the female. Once fertilised, the eggs mature inside the oviduct of the mother. The eggs then hatch internally and give 'birth' to the resultant offspring soon after. Swordtails are prolific breeders and successful breeding in a community tank will generally occur in one that is well planted as the plants provide hiding places for the fry to escape from being eaten by other fish. A note about breeding is that they are capable of hybridising with the closely related Platy (X. maculatus) and produce fertile offspring (hybrid offspring are generally infertile). This has been an important factor in developing the large color variations seen in both species.