



**HUNTER PETS**

14 Waterloo Ave, Thornton NSW 2322

**Phone:** 02 4966 5988

**Email:** [pets@hunterpets.com.au](mailto:pets@hunterpets.com.au)

## **TROPICAL CARE SHEET**

Modern developments in aquarium design have made the keeping of tropical aquarium fish easy and lots of fun. Aquariums are basically a miniature underwater garden in which fish provide colour and movement. To appreciate the full beauty of tropical fish it is necessary to put them in the right setting, with underwater plants and rocks, the complete scene being lit with fluorescent or other lamps mounted in a cover over the aquarium.

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Basically, the aquarium, a stand, gravel, plants, a light, heater thermostat, thermometer, a filtration system, some water conditioners and water from the tap.

**THE TANK:** These come in a variety of sizes; choose the largest you can afford because bigger volumes of water are usually more stable and give plants and fish the best conditions. Water is heavy, so be sure to choose the right spot for your aquarium before you fill it. Place the tank on a strong rigid, flat surface; you can cushion the weight by placing a sheet of expanded polystyrene between the base of the stand. Choose a place which is away from a window as aquarium displays look better in dark areas and because excessive light encourages the growth of algae.

**THE EQUIPMENT:** The heater and thermostat should keep the water at a steady temperature of about 25°C. The filter and/or airpump, circulate the water and help keep it clean. Your aquarium or pet store will assist with the selection of a suitable heater and filter for your situation. The lighting equipment displays the aquarium scene and is essential for stimulation of plant growth. Aquarium lights should be on for 12-14 hours every day. Regular light hours are important for plant growth. A printed background adds a nice finishing touch to the display.

**GRAVEL AND ROCK:** This should be obtained from your pet shop as the composition of gravel and rock from other sources is of an unknown quality, so beware. Both should be washed thoroughly before placing in the tank. An under gravel filter system, if being used, should be installed beforehand and the gravel should be graded to be higher at the back of the tank and slope down to the front. Rock can be slightly submerged in the gravel. Other filters, airline from the pump, heaters etc, can now be put in place, but **DO NOT** turn on any electrical equipment until after the tank is filled with water.



## **HUNTER PETS**

14 Waterloo Ave, Thornton NSW 2322

**Phone:** 02 4966 5988

**Email:** [pets@hunterpets.com.au](mailto:pets@hunterpets.com.au)

**FILLING THE TANK:** To avoid disturbing the gravel when filling the tank, place a saucer in the aquarium on which to pour the water. Remove it when the aquarium is nearly full. Plants can be added to the aquarium at this point.

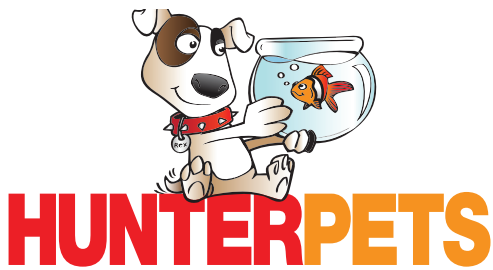
**WATER:** Leave the water to settle for several days before fish are introduced. A water treatment preparation may be added to assist the process and cut down the waiting period, but about a 24 hour period is necessary to make sure equipment is working properly and the correct water temperature is being maintained. Water testing kits which are necessary to monitor water quality, are available at your aquarium store.

**CHOICE OF FISH:** There is an enormous choice of fish but it is important to only introduce varieties recommended by your store. Consideration must be given to compatibility, size, food requirements. The vast majority of tropical fish on display in most stores make good community tank inhabitants.

**HOW MANY FISH?:** Your aquarium or pet store can advise on how many fish your aquarium will hold. One of the most important things to remember is that it takes about a month to establish sufficient, good, water purifying bacteria, to keep the tank in some sort of balance. It is therefore essential that you start with one a few fish and don't stock the tank to capacity until after this 3-4 week period.

**MAINTENANCE:** The most important thing to remember is that fish are directly affected by their environment. If there is anything wrong with the water it will affect the inhabitants.

**WATER CHANGES:** These should be carried out by changing 25% of the water at least monthly. This is to remove waste which would otherwise build up in the water. The whole tank only needs pulling down when the sand becomes choked with mulm (fish waste). This usually does not occur for at least one year if you have an effective filtration system.



**HUNTER PETS**  
14 Waterloo Ave, Thornton NSW 2322  
**Phone:** 02 4966 5988  
**Email:** [pets@hunterpets.com.au](mailto:pets@hunterpets.com.au)

**TAP WATER:** Many town water supplies are now chlorinated and this can be very harmful to fish. It can be removed by adding an anti-chlorine agent (from your pet shop).

**FEEDING:** Tropical fish should be fed two to four times a day, but only the amount they can consume within two minutes. Generally, fish should be fed small amounts, often.

**OVERFEEDING:** Overfeeding is the greatest single hazard faced by the new aquarist. Fish will only eat food which is not decaying; even scavengers will reject polluted and decaying food. Remove any uneaten food after a few minutes if you have misjudged the amount.

**FEEDING OVER HOLIDAYS:** Fish can survive for many days without food. It is far better to allow fish to go hungry or use a 'holiday block', than give too much food before you go. Do not entrust their feeding to an inexperienced but well-meaning neighbour or friend.

**CLOUDY WATER:** Cloudy water is almost invariably caused by overfeeding.

**GREEN WATER:** Green water is caused by too much light; usually coupled with overfeeding and/or overstocking.

**ALGAE CONTROL:** Excessive algae growing on rocks or glass is caused by too much light and is fixed by; reducing the amount of light to the aquarium, introduce algae-eating fish, increasing the number of aquatic plants or by using an algae-killing product.

**HEALTH:** Ensure that household chemicals such as sprays and pest strips are not used in the same room as the aquarium. No metal, wood or foreign objects should be placed in the tank. Before commencing treatment for any fish disease always check the fishes' environment for the following physical factors first:

1) insufficient water changes



**HUNTER PETS**  
14 Waterloo Ave, Thornton NSW 2322  
**Phone:** 02 4966 5988  
**Email:** [pets@hunterpets.com.au](mailto:pets@hunterpets.com.au)

- 2) pH (too acid or alkaline)
- 3) hardness (too soft or too hard)
- 4) correct feeding (too much or too little)
- 5) chemical contamination
- 6) incorrect temperature
- 7) crowded conditions; or
- 8) incompatible fish.

Fish problems that commonly affect aquarium fish can be simply divided into five groups:

- a) Environments - see previous list
- b) Fungus - is always secondary infection caused by incorrect water conditions, physical damage, or some other disease. Treat by fixing original cause, then medicate with fungus cure.
- c) White Spot - a common fish parasite appearing like little specks of salt over the fins and body; easy to cure. Treat with White Spot remedy.
- d) Bacterial diseases. Appear as if fins and body are rotting away, often accompanied by white slimy appearance around the mouth, back and back of tail. Treatment: only a few preparations are available that specifically treat aquarium fish bacterial diseases. Ask the advice of your pet shop and ensure the label states it treats bacterial diseases.
- e) Parasitic diseases. Caused by microscopic skin parasites causing fish to scratch on sand, plants or rocks. Fish appear pale in colour and fins often fray in the latter stage of the disease. Ensure label of medication states it will treat most external skin parasites.

**IMPORTANT:** Whenever adding chemicals or medications to aquariums, ensure the directions are strictly adhered to. Know how much water your aquarium holds or an overdose may occur, and fatalities will be the result. Fish keeping can provide lots of fun, but if problems occur see the experts - your pet or aquarium shop. Aquarium fish are easy to keep providing the few basic principles are outlined here are adhered to.