



# The COMPLETE guide to Aquariums

By

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# The COMPLETE guide to Aquariums

Welcome to the COMPLETE guide to Aquariums. In this ebook you will find up to date information that will help you make the best decisions and choices when purchasing your aquarium.

An aquarium is made of glass or extremely strong plastic and is basically made for holding fish, amphibians or any other type of marine animal. These fish can be tropical or salt water, or even corals but the aquarium has to be able to maintain the weight of the water that will be put into the tank. Aquariums are fast becoming one of the leading hobbies around, many people use aquariums for decorative purposes.

Aquariums range in size, they can be simple gold fish bowls or they can be intensive set up reaching something like eight or even nine feet wide. Many people even boast of a fish room. Fish collecting has been around for years and is especially popular in countries like Japan. The Japanese are renowned for keeping coldwater fish such as Koi in extremely decorative ponds outside, these Koi are basically beautifully decorated goldfish.



The word aquarium originates from the ancient Latin language, “aqua” meaning water and the suffix “rium” meaning place or building. Aquariums are beautiful and look good anywhere! They are perfect for those people who want to devote a lot of time and effort to a hobby. This is not the type of thing that you can just start and leave. This is an on going type of project that needs to be constantly assessed and adjusted. The animals inside the aquarium need to be fed, need to have the aquarium represent their natural habitat and need space, so you have to get a large enough aquarium to fit the animal or animals of course!

Aquariums are stunning pieces of equipment but they do need a lot of work and attention. That's why this hobby is not for young people. It is more of an older person's hobby who is going to be willing and responsible enough for all the things that are required when setting up and maintaining an aquarium. They can be the most beautiful thing to look at if they are decorated nicely enough, and I'm sure that you will do a great job in making sure that the aquarium looks just like the creature natural habitat, this is what makes the animal

settle quicker! Just make sure that you are prepared to take on the responsibility before investing in an aquarium as they are also quite expensive!

Home aquariums are becoming more and more popular, it is a hobby that many people are flocking too and fish shops are on the rise. Fish are generally easy to keep although do they need quite a bit of attention. Puppies and kittens were the typical pet but now fish are becoming more and more frequent in house holds. In recent years fish shops have noticed a great increase in the rise if people wanting to purchase aquariums and fish, the boom has been great for local shops as the fish industry hasn't been such a great industry before now.

When collecting fish for a home aquarium it is always great to seek some advice from your local pet shop. They are the experts and what they say should be given great consideration. They explain to you the process in which bacteria builds up. They let you know all the essentials in setting a great home aquarium and they know the best fish that is suited to your needs. They let you know all about the responsibilities that are involved when deciding to set up a home aquarium. Fish shops are brilliant for purchasing the equipment that you need, it is cheaper than anywhere else, except the internet of course. Most fish experts will advise you to purchase a ready made aquarium that comes with the tank, stand, heater, filter and lighting equipment.

Home aquariums can be as small and simple as you like or they can be huge and intensive set ups that requires hours each week of maintenance. A home aquarium can be a great experience for all the family and it is something that they can all join in, although keep the children away from the poisonous fish, and the fish waste! Which ever aquarium set up that you choose you should always make sure that you take great effort in keeping the fish. After all it would not be nice to wake up one morning and find that all your fish are dead, now would it?!



## **Aquarium Accessories**

Aquariums need to be filled with accessories, not just for decoration but for the fish's or other animals own survival. If fish don't have a filter and a heater they will die, it's the same with some amphibians. They need a lot of light and heat or they will die! You have to make your tank look as though it is part of their natural habitat; you have also got to make sure that it functions like it too.

When setting up an aquarium for fish you have to make sure there are lights, heat and filtration. The filter is extremely important as this keeps the water waste free, which is essential to keeping your fish alive. The filter sucks in water from the bottom and basically recycles it and it comes out the top fresh and clean. There are other methods of filtration, but that is the most common one, unless it is a saltwater tank then you have an external sump tank and that does all the filtration. Filters can be picked up in any pet or fish shop.

Heating is also another crucial element of setting up an aquarium. This aquarium accessory regulates the temperature of the tank, and yes it can be used in water. You can set the heater to a temperature that you want the water to stay at, most tropical fish like the water around twenty six or twenty seven degrees Celsius. Fish are pretty fussy about their temperature, they start to do funny things when it gets too cold and when it is too hot they will die. Heaters are available in every fish shop and you can choose the size and voltage of the heater, as bigger tanks will need bigger and powerful heaters.

Lights are another essential aquarium accessory, as they help certain fish live such as corals and anemones; yes they are living creature's not just plants. They need intensive lighting conditions to ensure that they don't size, the lights need to be at least a T-5 which means one of the most powerful lights that you can buy and of course they are very expensive and heavy. They are only available in specialised shops and not all fish shops stock them. They may need to be ordered in or you can purchase them second hand, which I would say is your best option.

## **Aquarium Cabinets**

Aquarium cabinets often come with tanks when they are purchased from a fish shop. The size of the tank depends on the size of the cabinet. Most cabinets act as stands for the aquarium tank. The cabinets usually come with a cupboard under the place where the tank is located. This is a good place for you to store your equipment that you are not using for example, spare heaters, ornaments and filters, also the fish food if it is flakes otherwise the food needs to go in the freezer.

Aquarium cabinets range from all different sizes and colours, they can be custom built or you can have a generic one. Custom built cabinets are very expensive although you get exactly what you are looking for. Generic cabinets are available in all different sizes. They are built to withstand the different sizes of tanks so you can get generic aquarium cabinets usually up to about six feet long and they are usually sold in maple, black or pine and the style of design is usually a cupboard with shelves.

Aquarium cabinets are available in all fish and pet shops. Although if you are looking for a bigger cabinet then it is best to go to a specialised fish shop rather than your local pet store. The cabinet is usually used for adding a bit more decoration with your aquarium as placing them on tables and other types of units can look unsightly. The stand is there to add some more spice to your set up.

A custom made set up differs greatly from a generic one. They are often made to suit what kind of style that you want, whether that is drawers or open shelves. They are usually made in about four or five weeks, depending on the size and style of the aquarium that you are wanting to be built. No matter whether it is a custom or generic cabinet, the aquarium cabinet should accentuate the beauty of your tank! They are expensive but are worth the money that you pay for them!

## **Aquarium Equipment**

Aquariums are not just a tank and a stand, the aquarium has to be filled with certain equipment such as heaters and filters. Aquarium equipment is essential in the up keep of your fish. The tank needs to be clean and the fish need to be kept happy if they are going to survive in their new home. When imported to this country, fish are kept in small boxes so they have not had any experience of being in a large proper tank.

Heaters are an essential part of your aquarium because if you have any kind of tropical, they need hot water to survive, anything cooler than twenty degrees Celsius for a period of time will kill them. The temperature needs to be around twenty six or twenty seven degrees. Choosing a proper heater is essential when it comes to heating issues, if you buy a heater with too low voltage it will not substantiate a large tank, and a heater that has too high a voltage will only fry your fish! Always ask your fish shop staff what the best choice is for your tank.

Filters are a big part of aquarium equipment, without a filter all the bad bacteria in the tank will build up and make it hard for your fish to breath; this is known as new tank syndrome. When you haven't left your tank long enough to cycle there isn't enough bacteria to kill the ammonia and nitrates that the fish produce in their waste. Once the waste builds up it makes it hard for the fish to breath. If you have enough bacteria in your filter however then your fish waste will be broken down in the filter and the water that is put back out of the filter will be clean and pure.

Aquarium equipment is essential in maintaining your tank and its fish, if you leave the tank to keep it clean then it won't work, if you leave the tank to heat itself it won't work. You have to make sure that you supply the tools the tank needs to keep your fish happy and healthy; otherwise you are looking at a tank of dead fish!

## **Aquarium Filters**

There are two different kinds of filters; there are external filtration systems and internal filters. Internal filters are used in salt water and fresh water aquariums. Many salt water aquariums have an internal tube for the water to flow down into a sump tank, which is just below the main tank and all the water passes through a certain type of foam where all the waste and bad bacteria gather and this filters the water. The water is then pumped back up to the top of the main tank and this flow continues on constantly.

Although a noisy method, it is the second most effective but rather pricey. The other way of doing internal filtering is to have what looks like a large black rectangle stuck to the inside of your tank, this sucks up water and waste through its bottom, the water then passes up through the filter. This method is the third most effective method and is very cheap.

The external filter is the way to go, this filter is a hard working piece of machinery that keeps your aquarium in tip top condition and gets rid of all the water. It is like the other two methods of internal filtering above but it is all done outside of the tank. The only thing connecting the tank to the filter is a long black tube. This is the most effective and expensive way to filter your tank but it is very worth it.

All these types of filters are available at your local fish shop, but not really your local pet shop. For the internal filter that requires a sump tank this is usually custom made to suit your tank so it is expensive but not really worth the money. You are probably better choosing an external filter, although it will cost you more it is more effective and it creates less noise.

## **Aquarium Heaters**

Heating in an aquarium is essential for fresh water and salt water fish. They both like their water to be hot as they are both tropical species of fish. Goldfish are cold water fish so you don't need to worry about a heater for them. Often when winter arrives, fish shops get many calls asking why their fish have just suddenly died or are acting strange. This is because people have not turned up the heaters in their fish tank! As the weather gets colder people forget that their house temperature drops and so does the tanks temperature so you have to adjust the heater for this time of year! If there is just a one degree drop in twenty four hours it could bring on a fish disease called "ich" or it could outright kill a fish!

When buying a heater you have to look at all the options. You could buy a very cheap heater but then you have the problem where the heater will probably break, the thermostat isn't as good as regulating the tank and you don't have a temperature heat setting like others would. Then you have the mid priced heaters, they are generally the ones that people use. They have semi decent thermostats and hold their value reasonably well. After a period of time maybe six months to a year you have to change your heater as the heating element isn't always working properly after this time!

Try to check your heater every couple of weeks and check the temperature of the tank everyday so that you can make sure that your fish are not suffering! Too hot and you will basically boil your fish and too cold and you can freeze their blood. So try and keep the temperature regulated!

Always try to place your heater near a filter as this helps to distribute the heat. This helps to save your fish from hot or cold spots! Heating is essential in tanks so make sure that you are adequately prepared in the seasons that count!

## **Aquarium Hoods**

When you have an aquarium you need to have lighting set up and to do this you need to have somewhere to put it. Before now when it came to lighting, it used to come attached to your aquarium hood but that is not the case anymore. The shops are selling the hood, lights and light attachments separate which is costing people a fortune! Hoods are not only needed for lights but they are also needed to help the fish stay in the tank, some fish when they get excited especially when getting fed are often jumpy and it has been known for fish to basically propel themselves out of the tank, I speak through personal experience.

Aquarium hoods are available in either specialised aquarium shops or your local pet store. They are just simply a tank lid for the fish tank. It is essential that you have one of these otherwise you have no place for your lights; unless you get some hanging ones and hang them from your roof! Hoods are also essential for keeping those jumping fish in the tank! They are often made from plastic but some are made from wood. The wood variations are often more expensive than a plastic one, basically because of the wood and there is more time and effort put into making a wooden hood. Some tanks can have a hood customised to it. These are the most expensive ones. But at least they have the lights and light fixtures attached. When you buy a jewel aquarium the hood is included in the price and so are the lights and fittings.

Aquarium hoods are not very expensive but all the attachments and other accessories are costing fish collectors a fortune. They have to make sure that the tank has everything that it needs, but it is getting more and more expensive to run and maintain the tank. Just make sure that when starting to purchase the tank that you know all about the extra outlays that are involved with the tank! It would not be a good idea to purchase the tank and then not be able to afford the rest of the accessories!

## **Aquarium Lighting**

Aquariums need light for the fish to survive, this doesn't matter if it is a freshwater set up or a marine set up. There are however different types of lights available for each one. A lot of fish require different lighting conditions; your fish shop will advise you which is best for the fish that you are keeping.

Fluorescent lighting is best for brightly coloured fish this gives the impression of bold colours and a mysterious effect in the tank which makes the fish stand out even more. All aquarium lights are available in the different sizes to suit your tank, as there are lots different sizes of tanks available. Most tanks don't come with lights attached to the hood of the tank. They need to be purchased separately; this is expensive as you also need to buy the attachment for the lights as well.

There are harder lights needed for marine tanks, the reefs that can be made in these tanks need a lot of pure light and getting a lot of light means a large and expensive light bulb! The corals and anemones need a lot of light and sensitivity to survive, so lights should be a great factor in your aquarium if you are going to be setting up a coral reef.

Aquarium lighting is available at all fish and pet shops, they are easy to install but are very overpriced. I think, you can probably find second hand lights better but be sure to make sure that they are working before you purchase them or that was a waste of money.

Lighting your aquarium is essential that is how your tank is defined, if your lights are cheap and nasty then don't expect a good look in your tank, but if you spend that extra on good reliable and beautiful lights then you are sure to have a fish tank set up that is worth looking at! Explore all different colours of lights as well don't just stick to white there are pink, green and blues out there too, experiment with them and see what best suits your tank!

## **Aquarium Ornaments**

Aquarium ornaments aren't there to add any benefits to the fish, they are just for you to add some decoration in the tank. You can have all sorts of ornaments, big or small, traditional or caricature, simple or even complicated. There are thousands of different ornaments that you can buy in stores or you can even make your own. However ornaments are not for all fish, some fish don't like them, I know for a fact Oscars don't take well to any type of ornament or even plant. Some fish do need them though, basically to hide or live in and keep away from bigger fish.

Traditional ornaments are ornaments like castles and ships, they provide security for smaller fish from the bigger ones, they also provide a place to stay and play, yes fish do play! Fish ornaments are available in pet and fish stores. They tend to range from very low to very high prices. You can of course get more detailed ornaments that aren't shaped to be anything except for like branches with weeds on them. Some fish need their ornaments to resemble their natural home, for example lots of plants and branches in the tank.

If you have amphibians in your tank they often like a waterfall ornament with a bathing pool at the bottom of it so that they can bath in it. Amphibians need a lot of greenery in their tank as this resembles their home and therefore you should try to make sure that you fill you tank full of it! Aquarium ornaments are easy to come across and they don't take much effort to put in the tank.

You should always try to keep the ornaments like the animals natural habitat unless it is a fish that couldn't care less, like goldfish for example. Goldfish are very easy to keep and you can decorate their tank with all sorts of funny ornaments. With smaller fish you can try to decorate their tanks with funky ornaments but I always feel that the traditional ones are better!

## **Aquarium Plants**

Aquariums plants are not crucial when it comes to setting up a new aquarium but they do help adding attractive features to it. A tank full of fish or amphibians can be quite boring so the plants are there to spruce things up a little bit. You don't need to put plants in a tank that has bigger fish such as cichlids in them as they will just remove them as they don't like a lot of greenery in their tank, they like it rather rocky. When decorating an aquarium that is going to have smaller fish in it such as tetras and guppy's plants are essential. These types of fish like to have a lot of foliage to swim around in.

Aquarium plants can be bushy or slim like trees; they are there for the fish to hide in between and for the effect of a fish's natural habitat. Some fish were found in reefs and some where found among reeds and plants, so their habitats need to be imitated in the aquarium. A fish's life expectancy can be greatly raised when it comes to their habitat; if they have enough room to move around and the aquarium is set up like how they are used to, then this will keep the fish happy, and when fish are happy they eat and stay alive; an unhappy fish won't eat and eventually it will die.

An aquarium plant can be used for decorative purposes or can be used for helping the fish. Plants are there to help your fish survive in its new home, if the fish is unhappy it affects the way that it lives and feeds. This in turn can affect whether the fish lives or not, and we don't want a dead fish on our hands, now do we. So if you are going to get small fish then make the effort and spend a little more to get the best plants for the fish to keep them happy, if your going for big fish don't bother spending the money or wasting the time! Plants are also used for decoration. Arranging the plants in a pretty way can make all the difference to your tank!

## **Aquarium Pumps**

A pump is something that isn't essential in an aquarium set up but it is desirable as this causes more oxygen for the fish. The pump is usually attached to a long tube which is in turn connected to a long stone that has small holes through out it; the pump blows air into the holes creating bubbles in the aquarium. This creates a larger surface area therefore creating more oxygen for the fish.

It is also good for decorative purposes. Bubbles can look attractive in a tank and also you get special statues that require pumps, such as opening treasure chests and so on that are used for novelty tanks. Pumps are generally expensive but very easy to get. When purchasing a pump you have to buy the special plastic tubing and the ornament that you want to buy with it, whether it is the long stone or the novelty statue that you want.

Aquarium pumps are easy to buy but are quite expensive however the equipment that goes with the pump is cheap. It is up to you whether you have a pump in your aquarium, because like I said, it is not essential and only there for decorative purposes and only a small amount of extra oxygen. Most simple fish set ups have pumps but harder fish such as cichlids are fussier about what goes in their tanks and they do not like a lot of bubbles, I speak from experience! Don't worry if bigger cichlids re-arrange your tank, it happens!

When purchasing a pump make sure that you have everything that you need to go with it, the hose and the statue, not to mention a free plug socket. Aquariums use a lot of electricity and you may think that it does not matter but this will of course add to the bill. The statue or the long rock that comes with the pump needs to be maintained to prevent any blockages; you don't want your bubbles to be stuck... now do you! Just give it a clean ever few weeks (in a separate bowl of your tank water) and this will help to prevent blockages. Other than that, that is all you really need to know about pumps. All I can say now is have fun with your new aquarium.



## **Aquarium Stands**

Aquarium stands are a great thing to have in your home when you have an aquarium. Placing tanks on tables can be dangerous; maybe the table is not strong enough to withhold the weight of the tank filled with water? The table may be on wheels? These are things that you have to think about and you can't just leave a tank on the floor. When a tank is filled it is impossible to move as it is extremely heavy with water, and it is not very nice to get the fish settled then haul them out and start over again. So the best thing that you can do is to purchase a proper stand and place the tank on it before setting up your aquarium.

Aquarium stands can be bought at any fish shop; they usually come with a cabinet on the bottom, and range in size. They need to have their weight spread out so that they can support the weight of the full tank. Most tanks come in beech or black but they are easy enough to strip and paint. There are some aquariums that come ready with their stand. They are like multi pack aquariums, the stand and all the equipment such as heaters, filters and lights all come together and of course the stand is included. These are probably the best types of aquariums to buy.

When purchasing your aquarium stand second hand always give it a thorough checking over, make sure that there are no cracks or pieces of the stand are loose as this could make your stand faulty and it may not be able to hold the weight of the tank, which is of course essential. Examine the stand and if you have any doubts don't buy it, it is not worth it if it falls to pieces two weeks after the tank has been set up! Choosing your aquarium stand is not hard; just make sure that it is the right size for your aquarium. Also that it is not falling to bits and of course it is in the colour that you want.

## **Aquarium Glass**

Aquariums are built from specially enforced glass to make sure that when the water is added to the tank and all the equipment and the fish are in, the tank doesn't fall apart and end up all over the floor. The glass itself is terribly heavy and when you add water it is impossible to lift, unless you are the strongest man or woman in the world! Fish tanks don't just need to be made from glass; they can be made from acrylic too.

Aquarium glass is basically extremely thick and strong glass that is built to withstand the pressure and the weight of at least ninety litres of water. Some tanks are as big as eight or nine feet long and three or four feet wide so you can just imagine the amount of water needed to fill that tank and then the pressure that is on the glass, but the glass never beaks. It is sealed at the sides to make sure that it can withstand the weight of the water. You would not want that tank to break and splash out all that water on your living room floor!

Fish tanks can also be made from acrylic. Acrylic is known to be at least twice as strong as glass and half the weight. The benefits of acrylic tanks are that it can be moulded when heated to suit whatever shape or style of tank that you want. Also when the sides are moulded together with heat they are said to be stronger than the sealant used to hold the glass together. Acrylic tanks don't sound like a good option to me; I think I will be sticking with glass tanks. Acrylic tanks are new and not many people have used them yet. The glass is still the best alternative for me and my fish!

Aquarium glass is easy enough to pick up although it is quite expensive. As with everything else you can get your aquarium built to suit you, so you don't have to purchase one from the shop, although unless you are someone who can build a tank it is going to cost you a pretty penny or two!

## **Aquarium Shops**

Aquarium shops are becoming more popular, there is now at least two in each mid sized town. Fish collecting has had a great boost from out of nowhere! The best place that you can get your aquarium accessories and tanks is an aquarium shop. They are cheaper than pet shops that sell items for other animals. When buying the more specific species of fish, aquarium shops is the place to go, pet shops usually only deal in the smaller more basic types of fish whereas aquarium shops specialise in fish. That's why they have a much larger range of fish.

Aquarium shops have all the accessories that you need, you don't need to shop anywhere else. They have everything from filters, heaters, lights, fish and food! They even stock tanks, stands and plants! They are the place to go when first starting out your fish hobby as they are the best for advice on how to get your fish set up on the go! They will let you know all about the bacteria process and what needs to be done to maintain a healthy tank! Aquarium shops also stock things such as chemical solutions to help keep the water pure and clean. They also offer things like water test kits to make sure that your water levels such as PH, ammonia and nitrates stay at the level that they should be!

When visiting an aquarium shop you should have the type of tank that you want in mind, whether it is tropical or saltwater. Or what kind of fish that you would like if you already have a tank set up. Fish shops have a more personal feel to it, the staffs are friendly and are there to give you some ongoing support with your tank, and they help you start your tank and are there for the long haul! Aquarium shops are brilliant for either the beginner or the advanced aquarist! Whatever your level of fish keeping, you will find everything that you need!

## **Aquarium Suppliers**

Tanks and tank stands are not hard to come by. They are usually available at your local aquarium supplier. Always try to measure up the size of the tank that you are getting as you need to have a decent place to put it, try to purchase stand at the same time for the tank this way you won't be stuck for a place to put it! Not only do aquarium suppliers stock tanks and stands but they also have every other thing that you will ever need for setting up and supporting your tank.

Aquarium suppliers should stock all the equipment that you will need for setting up your tank and keeping it tidy and clean and full of fish, of course! They don't just sell accessories they also sell a huge variety of fish. They tend to get one or two deliveries a week so make sure that you go in the day after a delivery to get the best of the bunch! Some aquarium suppliers often sell amphibians, things like turtles, frogs, newt and lizards. Some even stock spiders!

As well as the equipment and the animals they also sell food and water solutions, things that you can put in your tank to keep the water the way it should be. Some kinds of solutions you get are ones that will lower the level of nitrates and ammonia and get rid of the chlorine in the water. When setting up a tank always fill it with the water first then add some of these solutions and leave your tank to cycle for a little while before adding any fish. You can also add some artificial bacteria which then knocks time off the time that you have to wait before adding any fish!

Aquarium suppliers are available locally and they can also be found on the internet. The great thing about the internet is that it is usually cheaper and you get it delivered to your door so you don't have to spend all day trailing fish shops! Now you can shop online for a quicker and more efficient purchase.

## **Freshwater Aquarium Fish**

Freshwater tanks are a lot easier to maintain than a saltwater aquarium. The fresh water fish may not be easy to keep but the set up is a lot less complicated, you do not have to be chemist to run one of these tank set ups. Basically in your tank should be your filter, your heater and your lights. You will also need a thermometer. After the tank has been sitting for a few weeks getting the bacteria to cycle then it is ready for some freshwater fish!

There are different kinds of fresh water fish that you can get. There are of course large and small and different species of each. If you are just starting out and your tank is only for decorative purposes then stick with small fish, but if you see this as becoming a great hobby and you are going to stick to it then don't bother with small fish as they are a waste of money, it is better to get the bigger fish! Bigger species of fish aren't harder to keep than smaller ones, just different. When I say bigger species I don't mean that they are bigger to start of with, but most of the "bigger species" can grow to at least half a foot long. Cichlids and Malawi's are the usual favourites of fish enthusiasts, although they are both freshwater fish they both need different types of fresh water.

African Malawi's prefer hard water, and a lower PH. American Cichlids like to have a different temperature and PH level. Also there is a certain type of fish, known as Discus which is very, very expensive and hard to keep. There PH level has to be maintained almost exact throughout their tank life or it can result in death, they also like their temperature higher than most fresh water fish, nearly thirty degrees.

When choosing your fresh water fish make sure that they are fish that you like! Not to mention make sure that the fish that you choose are going to be relatively easy for you to keep, there is no point in purchasing hard to keep fish if you are not going to spend the time and take on the responsibility to look after them! Fish are living creatures to and they need a lot of looking after, so don't purchase them if you are not prepared to do so.

## **Tropical Fish Aquarium**

Tropical fish are beautiful and are brilliant for keeping at home provided that they have the right habitat. When thinking of keeping tropical fish always remember to have a suitable home for them, a large enough tank, clean fresh water, a tank that resembles their natural habitat and plenty of food. When fish are happy then they are likely to live longer so making sure that your fish has all those things mentioned then you are already on your way to being a great fish keeper.

There are several types of fish that you can have in your tropical fish aquarium. You can keep smaller fish such as Neon's, Tetras, Angel fish, Guppies and Gourami's or you can keep larger fish for example cichlids or Malawi's. When it comes to cichlids and Malawi's there are different types of fish that fall into these categories. Cichlids are well known to be like cannibals, there are fish such as Oscars, black belts, jaguars, parrots and Jack Dempsey's to name a few. The list goes on. Malawi cichlids have fish like Black Doral's, blue nose, chidunga and luhuchi to name a few.

Tropical fish aquariums are made up with freshwater. The water needs to be completely purified, no salt or chlorine in the water. The best thing to do is set up your tank about four weeks before purchasing any fish and let the bacteria cycle; this will give your fish the best start in your tank. You get what is known as new tank syndrome, if you put your fish in the tank too soon. The bacteria have not had enough time to build up and the fish suffer. The bacteria is extremely important as this is what gets rid of the fish waste and if there is not enough bacteria the waste gathers and becomes toxic to the fish. This is also why a lot of learning needs to be done. Never use fresh water. Always take out boiled tank water to clean your filter so that you don't destroy the good bacteria! When cleaning the gravel in your tropical aquarium always remember to have some water prepared a few weeks beforehand. Fill up a bucket of water and leave some chlorine solution in it. This will also help to protect your fish.

A tropical fish aquarium is an absolutely stunning piece of furniture for any home but it does require constant attention, so you have to make sure that you know what is involved before getting into fish keeping. If you are ready for the challenge and you can keep your tank clean and your fish happy, then there is no reason why you can't be a great fish keeper, good luck!

## **Jewel Aquariums**

You can walk into your local pet store and buy a plain tank and a hood, then purchase all the lighting and accessories and then the fish to go with it. This is an extremely expensive method to start an aquarium. It is like when you go shopping if there is a multi-pack you buy it, because it is cheaper than buying all the items individually. Buying an aquarium is just the same. If you can get all the items in one bundle for one price it is fantastic. But there is only one manufacturer that does this and they are called "Jewel". Jewel aquariums are ready made aquariums with a stand containing built in filters, heaters and lights, some even include ornaments and gravel.

There are several different kinds of Jewel aquariums: They record 60, 70, 96 and 120. The numbers stand for the size. They all come with the cabinet/stand, light, heater and filter. If you bought this on the internet, it is likely to be a lot cheaper than your fish shop, but your fish shop is likely to be a lot cheaper than your pet shop! There is also the Rio range; they are available in five sizes, the 125, 180, 240, 300 and 400 litres, they come in black and beech. Then you also have the jewel vision series of tanks which include the 180, 260, and 450. This tank offers a curved front glass which makes it different to the other two styles that jewel offers. Last but not least the Trigon range, they are corner fish tanks and stands and are the most expensive of the lot. They include the 190 and the 350. All of the tanks include filtration, heating and heating systems.

All jewel aquariums are beautiful and ready made to suit you. The internet prices usually include delivery. What is great about delivery is that you have a couple of extra people lift the tank in for you which is brilliant as it is very heavy. The cabinets however are to be built at home, they are flat packed!

## **Marine Aquariums**

You basically have to be a chemist to do a marine aquarium set up, they require a lot of dedication time and effort, you are looking at about half a hour per day at least. The aquarium set up is difficult to master and then taking care of the fish that go in the marine is even harder. I'm not trying to put you off. I'm just warning you that this is for no light hearted or easy going fish friend; this is for the avid hard bearing fish enthusiast! They require the correct PH level and temperature constantly, and also the correct level of salt to water level; this would be the most important part of any marine set up as the fish need the salt to survive!

Most salt tanks need a salt level of about 1.6 or 1.7. You can buy tools that will measure what kind of level that your salt is at. They also require a specific PH level; collect fish that need roughly the same PH level or you could end up with a disaster. The marine aquarium needs a complex filter system that is made by professionals and is very, very expensive to buy. The equipment, the storage and the fish are almost double the price of a freshwater aquarium but the end result is worth all the effort and hard work. The fish are absolutely stunning and are worth whatever you were willing to pay for them, not only that you are not limited to fish in this set up, you can have coral reefs instead! You can have anemones and special corals and you need only a few fish with some bottom feeders like crabs and shrimps and this still provides a beautiful tank, but because of the delicacy of the corals, it does tend to require a little bit more work. I know you think that more work isn't possible but it is!

A marine aquarium is stunning when it is set up, but the filtration system is complex, the materials and the fish are expensive and the whole thing needs a lot of time and work. Only use this kind of aquarium if you are willing to do all those things I have mentioned!



## **Tropical Aquarium**

Tropical Aquariums are for keeping tropical fish, but you can have two different types of fish, saltwater or freshwater. Saltwater fish obviously needs saltwater and the salt needs to be a regulated level along with the PH and temperature. Freshwater fish need to have fresh purified water, both of these set ups need the good bacteria that helps to keep the aquariums clean.

Tropical aquariums that contain saltwater are only for saltwater fish. If you put a freshwater fish in this tank it will die! Saltwater fish are made to stand the levels of salt and are essential for the fish to breath and move. If salt wasn't present they would die a death like suffocation. In saltwater aquariums you need to make sure that there are living rocks in it, this means rocks that already have the good bacteria present. You then need to leave the rock in the tank for at least two months before putting any fish in, this is to get a bacteria cycle on the go. Once the bacterium has built up, I set up the filter. After that it is safe to add the fish.

Freshwater tropical aquariums are for fish that need clear and clean water. This water has to be chlorine and ammonia free. The freshwater tank also needs to be set up and cycling for at least four weeks before adding any fish to it, as this will help the bacteria to build and make sure that the ammonia levels are kept to a bare minimum, ammonia is a substance that will kill our fish as it makes breathing for them very hard to do. You know when your tank has very high levels of ammonia because the fish are at the top of the tank struggling to breath but the trick is not to change the water, what to do is clean out the filter in some of the tank water (in a separate bowl of course) and then put it back in within a day or so. The water will be in a completely better condition. Purchase a water test kit to check your levels or nutrients before putting in your fish, they are not expensive but are a great help.

Tropical aquariums are stunning ornaments in any household! Just make sure that you don't forget about the work and responsibility involved, they may be fish but they are still alive and should of course be kept that way!

## **Reef Aquarium**

When choosing the route that you want to follow when it comes to aquariums a reef set up is probably one of the more complex set ups that you can choose. Reef aquariums are full of corals and anemones; they also include some reef fish. Some fish can't be included in a reef set up as they eat the anemones! Anemones are very delicate types of plants. I must say that they eat their food very funny! When feeding an anemone just lay the fish food over the anemone and the anemone then takes the food in its tentacles and starts to curl its self over and then place the food down into its mouth (the small crease that opens when the anemone is feeding in the middle of it!)

Reef aquariums are one of the most beautiful set ups that you will see, with a special set of lights you can ensure that your corals and anemones are going to look stunning. Also some fish can be included in your reef aquarium. Although when setting up your reef aquarium make sure that you avoid bottom feeders such as shrimps and crabs, another type of fish to avoid when it comes to anemones are the different kinds of puffer fish as they like to eat them although they sting! Crabs and shrimps like to eat and pick away at the reef life as well. So these are not advised!

After choosing the things that you want to include in your tank, you then have to make sure that you have the proper conditions for them. You have to ensure that the PH level, salt level and temperature are all correct for the things that you are going to place in your aquarium. If the conditions are not what the reef requires, then it will die! If taken care of, your reef will grow to a beautiful picture and look absolutely stunning! What would you prefer?



## **Saltwater Aquarium**

Saltwater aquariums are for fish that can only live in salt water obviously. Some of the fish are grouped for example triggers and groupers. Each play their part in the salt water aquarium set up. You can also keep corals and anemones as well as saltwater fish, but avoid things like crabs and shrimps and snails as they will try to eat the anemones.

Fish are a beautiful addition to this kind of tank, the lights accentuate the beauty of the fish and the tank looks like the deep blue sea, try to add a solid blue background at the back of the tank and the light will make the tank look fantastic and like something that you will only see in movies. There are lots of different fish that are available to be put in the tanks such as: Lion Fish, Puffer Fish, Eels, Panther Groupers, Shrimps, Crabs and dog puffers. Each of these fish is stunning and under the light of tank against the deep blue background will keep you in awe!

Another variant that you can keep in a saltwater aquarium is a coral or an anemone. Some people only have these types of living things in their saltwater tank but they can be put in with some fish, most other fish will try to eat them especially the anemones. These types of plants are living, the anemones need to be hand fed, you should just place the food on top of it and it will then curl itself around the food and open up its mouth and feed itself, its is a miraculous thing to watch.

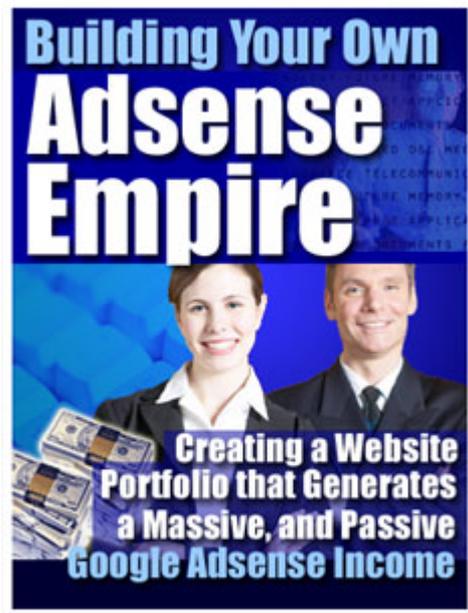
Saltwater aquariums are like watching the ocean, the colours bounce of the fish and hey all get on so well, but it is like any other type of fish species; if it is smaller it will get eaten by something bigger. You also have to watch out because some of the fish are poisonous, for example the lion fish; its tentacles if touched will sting your hand and you need to seek medical help straight away! Saltwater aquariums are only for the professional fish keeper though, as it takes a lot of work to get the conditions for the fish correct, the saltwater needs to be at a safe level as does the temperature and the PH. This is a hard work task but the rewards are well worth the effort.

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