



Adding Fish

Once the aquarium is established, the fish can finally be added. Only a few should be added to begin with and others over a couple of weeks to prevent overstocking and to allow their health and compatibility to be monitored.

Better Pets and Gardens can assist in selecting fish that are compatible with each other and require the same conditions. Before releasing the new fish, the water temperature should be equalised to reduce stress. To do this, float the entire bag that the fish have been transported in on the top of the water for about 10 to 20 minutes and then release.

Fish should not be kept in the bags that they are transported in for longer than 3 hours as the oxygen levels deplete and cause harm or death to the fish.

Feeding Fish

Feed fish once daily by sprinkling just enough food that will be consumed within a few minutes. By adding a small pinch of food gradually you can ensure you are feeding your fish just enough. Overfeeding causes pollution to the water and may harm the fish. If the food reaches the bottom of the tank before it is eaten then too much food was provided and this will be a guide for next time.

Fish enjoy variety in their food. Feed with flakes or pellets on most days but occasionally offer a feast of brine shrimp, blood worms, lettuce or cucumber.



Cleaning an Aquarium

Fish are at their healthiest when the water quality is kept to a high standard through regular water changes. To do this, siphon out a third of the water using a gravel vac. Prepare the new water prior to pouring in by ensuring that it is at room temperature and that the correct amount of water conditioner has been added. Remember to use the "fish bucket" as it should be free of all chemicals and residue.

In addition to the water change, clean the filter. Use the "fish bucket" to take some

aquarium water out of the tank and use this to wash the sponge and charcoal out of the filter. It does not need to be spotless but the majority of the waste should be removed. With the tank half full, the plants and decorations can be added.

Take a water sample to any Better Pets and Gardens store every week for the first 6 weeks and undertake regular water changes in this time so that ammonia, nitrates and nitrites don't build up to toxic levels.

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To see the full range of fact sheets and to find your nearest store, check our website
www.betterpetsandgardens.com.au

For great advice on setting up an aquarium, please ask one of our team at any Better Pets and Gardens store.

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FISH

Setting up a fresh water aquarium

Keeping an aquarium is a fantastic hobby for the whole family to enjoy. To ensure a healthy tank and happy fish, it pays to plan ahead.



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Fresh water aquariums are easy to look after and relaxing to watch. But, as in many things, preparation is the key to success. A fish tank should be set up long before the fish are added or even purchased.



1. Location

Before purchasing an aquarium, decide carefully where it will be placed as it will be difficult to move once filled with water. It is recommended to put the aquarium against an inside wall of the house as outside walls may cause the water to overheat, harming fish. Ensure that there is a sufficient power source nearby for running the light, filter and heater and avoid windows that flood the tank with natural light as this will cause algae to grow and the water to turn green.

Fish tanks need to be cleaned and topped up quite frequently so consider where the nearest water source is and that there may be water splashed on the floor periodically. Placing tanks on new carpet may not be the best idea.

Where tanks are placed on furniture or tables, it is best to put a sheet of Styrofoam on the surface under the glass base to reduce the strain on the aquarium once filled and prevent cracking.



BETTER ADVICE | Setting up a fresh water aquarium

2. Tank Preparation

Before beginning any of the process of setting up an aquarium it is essential to wash hands and rid them of all chemicals and oils that accumulate throughout the day.

Even new tanks need to be cleaned with a new sponge and water. Do not use detergents or cleaning agents as these will harm fish later on. Remove all dust and particles in the tank and then place it in the chosen position.



3. Gravel

Wash the gravel well in a large clean bucket before putting it in the tank to a depth of between 2 and 5cm. If an under-gravel filter is being used, ensure that this is also rinsed and then placed in the tank prior to the gravel.

4. Heater

Where tropical fish are to be kept, an aquarium heater allows water to be maintained at about 24°C but this may vary depending on the needs of the fish to be kept. These come with suction cups to attach to the glass inside the tank.

A thermometer will make monitoring the water temperature easier but the reading should be taken from the opposite corner of the tank to the heater.

Better Tips: Buy a new "fish bucket"

Buy a new "fish bucket" and keep this exclusively for use when cleaning and maintaining the aquarium. This will ensure that no unwanted chemicals are transferred from a contaminated bucket in to the tank.

5. Filter

Filters run continuously and are designed to remove wastes from the aquarium so that they do not build up and pollute the water. For best results, attach the filter to the middle of the back wall and follow the manufacturer's instructions for priming it. Internal filters must always be totally submerged before turning on whilst an external unit requires the tank to be full before switching on.

6. Adding Water

Once everything is set up and the tank absolutely clean, it can be half filled with cold water. Pour it into the tank gently so that there is minimal disturbance to the gravel bed.



7. Plants and Decoration

Rinse and clean all plants and ornaments in tap water prior to putting in the aquarium even if they are new. Arrange plants in the tank with taller

plants to the back and shorter to the front. Try to create a few feature areas and some depth to the appearance of the tank.



8. Final Water

Fill the tank to within 3cm of the top, taking care not to disturb the ornaments and plants.

Tap water contains chlorine which will harm fish so a quality water conditioner is added at this stage. Additional products are available to improve water quality and enhance biological filtration and it is best to discuss these with one of our team at any Better Pets and Gardens.

9. Tank Check

Switch on the filter and heater and allow it to run for two or three days then take a water sample to any Better Pets and Gardens store. Our staff will carry out a free water analysis to ensure that the water parameters suit the fish to be kept. The pH level of metropolitan water in WA is often very high which might suit some fish such as African Cichlids but not Discus. Once the aquarium has reached the correct temperature and water levels, the fish can finally be purchased.