



## Maintaining Your Freshwater Trickle Aquarium

### Daily Maintenance

The fish should only be fed once a day for unheated tanks, and twice a day for tropical tanks. Feed only as much food as can be devoured in 30 seconds. Over feeding is the most common cause of problems in aquariums. Feeding various types of food will provide the fish with a balanced diet, but only feed one type of food at a time. Should you happen to miss feeding the fish on one day, do not put in twice as much food the next day.

The light on the aquarium should only be on for 6-8 hours per day. Too much light will encourage algae to proliferate in the tank. With this in mind the aquarium should be positioned in a room so as it does not get any direct or excess light from windows. Any algae on the glass should be cleaned of with a scourer or magnetic cleaner.

Evaporation of water occurs naturally in all aquariums. It is important to ensure that the cover glasses on the tank are correctly fitted. This will ensure that evaporation is kept to a minimum and also avoid damage by condensation to any light fittings or canopy fitted to the tank. The water level should be checked to ensure that the return pump is covered. If the water level is below the minimum level indicator then addition water must be added to the system. Do not over fill.

The filter guard should be checked for any build up of debris and cleaned if necessary.

### Weekly Maintenance

The filter pad in the filter system should be removed weekly and cleaned. If the filter pad is excessively dirty or difficult to clean it should be replaced. Remember this is the mechanical section of the filter and is responsible for the trapping and removing of solid wastes.

Due to the breathing nature of this system the pH should be very stable. However, due to over feeding or overcrowding, the pH could fluctuate and therefore should be checked weekly.

Ammonia and nitrite can also cause problems in “new” or overcrowded aquariums. The trickle filter builds up a colony of nitrifying bacteria that convert ammonia to nitrite, and nitrite to nitrate. (Refer our Fact Sheet on the Nitrogen Cycle).

In a new aquarium there is little or no nitrifying bacteria present and it will take several weeks after fish have been added for the bacteria to build up to a sufficient level to cope with the ammonia waste produced by the fish. Therefore it is important that livestock are only added to the aquarium in small quantities at any time. Do not try to fully stock your tank in the first four weeks. (During this period it is also important that you perform a 10% water change each week.)

In an overcrowded aquarium there may be insufficient bacteria to cope with the ammonia produced by the fish. Therefore ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) and nitrite (NO<sub>2</sub>) can reach toxic levels. If (NH<sub>3</sub>) and (NO<sub>2</sub>) tests are undertaken on a weekly basis then problems can be avoided.

General weekly maintenance includes removing algae from the front and sides of the tank and

wiping down the cover glass. Plant food should also be added at the recommended dosage if there are live aquatic plants in the tank.

## **Fortnightly to Monthly Maintenance**

A 10-25% partial water change should be carried out fortnightly or monthly depending on the amount of livestock in the tank. The rule of thumb is the more livestock the more frequent the water changes. So much so that a heavily stocked system may need 10% water changes every week.

The livestock should be studied for any signs of stress or disease or unusual behaviour. Over the long term the livestock should appear healthy and show signs of growth. If you are concerned or unsure about anything occurring in your tank, please do not hesitate to come in and ask one of our staff for assistance. (If you are having a problem with any of your livestock it is advisable to bring a sample cup of water from your aquarium to Coburg Aquarium for testing.)

On a monthly basis, the pumps should be removed and cleaned, and the impeller removed, cleaned and checked as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Once again thank you for purchasing one of our exclusive trickle filter aquariums.



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