

Setting up: A basic overview

© Derek Jordan

A Guppy breeding set up should be designed for easy maintenance whilst at the same time maximising the amount of tanks that you can fit into the room that you have available. A handy tip is to always allow for expansion.

The Basic Set up

- The tanks should be set up length ways as this will allow you to fit more tanks in your given space i.e. 10" length x 10" height x 18" depth not 18" length x 10" height x 10" depth

- Keep the tanks bare no plants or gravel, this way they are easier to keep clean and free from disease.

- Use basic filtration air driven corner filters (my preference) or sponge filters with plenty of airflow through them, the water above the filter should look like it is boiling. The current and flow in the tank means that the fish has to develop strong muscles in its body especially in the caudal peduncle this helps the delta varieties hold their tails in a more natural way and not look like the tail is too heavy for the fish, giving a bent disposition to the fishes deportment.

- Use small tanks 5.5 gal for a breeding trio and 8-10 gal tanks for growing on will be fine. As a rule of thumb allow 1inch of fish per 1 gal of tank water, this way your fish should achieve their full potential.

- Find out what your water chemistry is in your tanks. The three most important water parameters for keeping Guppies are ph. (the measurement of acidity or alkalinity) GH (soft or hard water) and Temperature. With the amount of additives now available to the hobbyist it is not difficult to create the ideal water conditions for your fish. The ideal conditions for Guppies are ph. 7.2 (Guppies range 6.8-7.8) GH 8-12 (Guppies range 4 - 20) temperature range is between 50°f - 85°f with the ideal temperature being for fry 78f, juveniles (4-8 months) 76°f and for adults 74°f

·Lighting

The optimum amount of lighting that your Guppy needs is 12 hours per day, the best type of light is daylight but as we cannot guarantee 12 hours per day, we have to use fluorescent lights a 30 - 40 watt bulb will give sufficient light if mounted above your tanks it is not the intensity of the light that matters but the duration, a simple timer wired into your lighting system will ensure that the lights are turned on and off at the right time.

Maintenance

You will develop your own routines for maintenance based on the amount of time that you have available to give to your hobby, but remember that it is better to feed your fish small amounts of food every few hours than one gigantic feed per day. Frozen foods and live foods are digested easier than dry flake foods so can be fed in larger portions but do not overfeed your fish and kill them with kindness. If you overfeed your Guppies the excess food passes through the gut without been properly digested and will foul the tank leading to possible disease and despite the fact that you are overfeeding your fish they will be under nourished as the goodness within the food will not be properly digested.

Stocking Levels

As I have mentioned earlier as a rule of thumb allow 1 inch of mature fish to each gallon of tank water therefore a 10 gal tank would be able to house 10 fish to maturity. Higher stocking levels can be achieved by the more frequent use of water changes, but if you neglect these you will end up with stunted and poor quality fish.

Water Changes

Fish create waste and this waste creates both good and bad bacteria within the fish tank. If this waste is allowed to keep building up eventually the bad bacteria outnumber the good and the water conditions start to fall apart as does your Guppies fins and health. The way to combat this build-up of bad bacteria is to carry out regular water changes at least once a week and if time permits more regular, I change at least 25% of the tank water each week in my own tanks

Feeding

Guppies are omnivores. Always feed your Guppies as wide a range of quality flake foods, live and frozen foods. It is also better to feed little and often. A quality flake food feed 3 times per day is better than a large feed of frozen and live food fed once per day, remember if the fish cannot consume all the food you put in the tank in 2 minutes then you are overfeeding them or they are ill.

Try to avoid feeding your fish a diet rich in protein as this can cause constipation in the fish, causing a build-up of toxins in the fish's gut. As with all living animals a varied diet is best leading to healthier animals.

This article is copyright© and may not be reproduced without the permission of the author. To submit your questions and comments on the article direct to the author email:
derek.jordan@sjpp.co.uk