

Siamese Fighting Fish



(Betta Splendens)

Origin: Southeast Asia

Size: 2.5-3 inches

Life Span: 2-3 years

Temperature: 74°F-84°F

Congratulations on your new pet! The following are some basic guidelines to help your fish live a long, healthy life. Bettas are known as the “Jewel of the Orient” due to their variety of bright and iridescent coloration. In addition to being some of the most beautiful fish, they also have great little personalities! Bettas belong to the suborder *anabantoidei*, whose defining characteristic is their labyrinth organ. This organ allows labyrinth fish to take in oxygen directly from the air, instead of through the water by use of gills. Labyrinth fish have evolved in such a way to cope with the hardships of their environment.

SETTING UP THE BOWL

Equipment – bowl, gravel, water conditioner, and aquarium salt. An air pump, filter, and liquid biological bacteria are optional and help keep the tank cleaner.

Rinse both the bowl and the gravel with regular tap water thoroughly. **Do not** use soap or any other chemicals. This is the last time the gravel will be cleaned. Tap water conditioner removes the chlorine and chloramines we put in our drinking water to keep it germ free. Aquarium salt is a useful treatment for sores, infections, parasites, and functions as a precautionary measure against disease organisms as it stimulates the fish’s production of slime coating. Use about 6 drops per gallon of the tap water conditioner and ½ teaspoon of salt per gallon.

Filling and treating a gallon jug of water, and setting it aside for water changes, is an easy way to pre-measure out your additives and makes water changes easier.

- 1) Fill the bowl halfway with your pretreated water.
- 2) Float the bag within the bowl for about twenty minutes to acclimate the fish to room temperature.
- 3) After twenty minutes release the betta into the bowl and fill the bowl within two inches from the top.

FEEDING

Proper nutrition is important for the long-term health of the fish and to bring out their full, vibrant colors. Wild bettas feed exclusively on zooplankton, insects, and insect larvae. In captivity they can be fed a diverse diet consisting of high-protein flakes/pellets, bloodworms, brine shrimp, daphnia, tubifex, and glass worms. They should be fed a pinch of food or two pellets once or twice a day, skipping meals occasionally. If any food remains after thirty seconds, they are being overfed; cut the amount of food in half

BOWL MAINTENANCE

Unfortunately, the volume of water is so small that toxic levels of fish/plant waste: ammonia and nitrite can quickly accumulate and become fatal. For this reason, 25 - 50% water changes every few days are recommended. The following procedure is suggested.

- 1) Make your water changed easier by using a one gallon jug, premeasured with your salt and water conditioner.
- 2) Wipe down the inside of the bowl with an algae pad, if necessary.
- 3) Stir the gravel gently and carefully pour out 25 - 50% of the water. Removing the betta tends to be more work and stresses the animal out, so just keep your hand by the lip to prevent it from falling out..
- 4) Refill the bowl with the preconditioned, room temperature water, and straighten your gravel and decorations. **And you’re done!**

Fortunately, there are microorganisms at work that convert ammonia into nitrite, and then nitrite into nitrate; each gas being less harmful than the one preceding it. However these organisms can only help the ecosystem; if water changes are neglected, the beneficial bacteria can easily become overwhelmed and the ecosystem is liable to crash.

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