

A WaterZoo guide to...

Freshwater shrimps

It was only a few years ago that ornamental freshwater shrimps were first introduced to the hobby in the form of the Amano shrimp, known for its algae eating ability. Since 2008 the variety of species has increased dramatically with some stunning varieties now available and more coming into the hobby frequently.

While shrimps are compatible with many smaller species of fish and can be added to a community aquarium, they are crustaceans, so have requirements and care that may be a little to fish.

In our experience shrimps are more sensitive to poor water quality and low oxygen levels than most fish are, so always check your water is in top condition. They do not tolerate metals like copper that can sometimes be present in tap water, although a good water conditioner should neutralise this threat. Many aquarium medications can kill shrimps outright, bacterial products and water conditioners are safe, but very few disease and algae remedies are suitable for use in aquariums containing shrimps. Always thoroughly check the instructions before using in aquariums containing shrimps, and get further advice if unsure.

Shrimps do not need a special food provided there is plenty of algae or excess fish food available, if you want to feed them specifically we would suggest Ocean Nutrition Shrimp Wafer or Dennerle Crustagan, both developed specifically for shrimps.

As we already mentioned shrimps are compatible with many fish, but they should not be kept with large fish as many shrimps are only a few centimetres in length and may become an expensive meal. Avoid, Angelfish and most Cichlids larger than a few centimetres, Catfish, although sucker mouths and Corydoras are fine, as a rough guide do not mix shrimps with any fish that are more than twice their size. Fan shrimps are a good choice where fish are a bit larger, as they themselves are larger than average at up to 8cm.

Shrimps produce little waste, so do not contribute to your overall stocking level, provided water quality is good you can add almost as many as you want, within reason.

Shrimps are fascinating, so you may decided to keep them in their own dedicated nano aquarium, especially as this can be desktop size. We stock several that are supplied with lighting, filtration etc, and have a couple of demo units set up in store.

Filtration is recommended, but not crucial provided you can maintain good water quality, if the aquarium is filtered be sure that the shrimps cannot be drawn in the filter. Air driven foam filter make the ideal choice for smaller aquariums.

Most shrimps prefer the water a little cooler than fish, ideally between 20 and 23 C°, so a combined heater thermostat is not always a necessity, as they may be ok at room temperature. It is still worth checking the temperature and that it does not drop too low at night. We stock 10 watt nano heaters and nano thermometers to enable the temperature to be monitored and controlled, if necessary.

Shrimp aquariums should be densely planted providing plenty of cover, they will also constantly graze the leaves eating algae, and we stock a range of plants and decoration suitable for nano aquariums including moss balls and Crusta Caves.

This is guide gives basic information, and is only intended as an introduction. It is always worthwhile researching the needs of species before purchasing.

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