

HI FIN

JOURNAL OF AQUATICA MARINE AND FRESHWATER

Your connection to the aquatic community in Peel Region and across Canada

Volume 1 Issue 8



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Cover Photo: Motozo Stingray by Andrew Roebbelen

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Baby Egyptian Mouth Brooder
(*Pseudocrenilabrus multicolor*)
Photo by Andrew Roebbelen

Letter from the Editor



I think despite the cold weather that spring is officially here. Along with the sighting of the first robin, the crocus poking through the snow, another sure sign

of spring is the spring auctions. All across Canada our fellow aquarium clubs are gearing up for the spring auctions. Just to remind everyone that Peel Regions auction will be on Sunday March 15th hope to see you all there. If you like to travel check out some of the other auctions going on around Southern Ontario.

I hope everyone enjoys their spring and gets a chance to do some tank spring cleaning.

From the desk of,

Andrew Roebbelen

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COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Calendar

Spring Auction: Sunday Mar 15th
The Royal Canadian Legion
1133 Queen St. E.
@Queen and West Dr.

Next meeting: Thursday Mar 19th @ 7:00pm
Turner Fenton Secondary School
7935 Kennedy Road S , Brampton
(just south of Steeles Ave W)

Membership Info

The Peel Regional Aquarium Club (PRAC) is a progressive, non-profit organization whose purpose is to share with our members the many wonders of the best hobby in the world, fish keeping and to promote our hobby in the community.

Yearly Membership Fee
\$25 for adults and familys
\$10 for students



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HEAR YEA

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Peel Regional Aquarium Club *2009 Spring Auction*

Our spring auction will be held on **SUNDAY, MARCH 15th, 2009** at:

The Royal Canadian Legion Br.# 609
1133 Queen Street East
Bramalea, Ontario
Queen and West Dr
Just east of Hwy 410, south side

Seller's registration at 7:30am
Auction begins at 10:00am sharp!

PLANTS + DISCUS = WOW

Special Thanks to Bob Fenner
By Alesia Benedict
AquaticBlondeGal@aol.com

Not many people start off with a planted fish tank. Other than the childhood goldfish won at a fair, or a Betta in a vase, most people get into the hobby because they see a fish tank set up somewhere (friend's house, family member's home, doctor's office, restaurant, etc.) and think it looks cool. They make a mental note, and then it promptly gets "filed away" with all the other mental notes (balance checkbook, start diet, call brother Bill..). Then one day, on the way to the dry cleaners, they drive past a garage sale and see a fish tank and stand for sale. A brain synapse fires, and it registers: I WANT THAT!

A beautiful display of aquatic plants at an pet industry trade show

So they make the purchase and go home and set up the tank. Then off they go to the pet store to get some bright blue gravel to match the living room, and some pretty fish to fill it up. And thus, their hobby begins.

Sure, there are other variations - they go to the pet store first to buy cat food and a pretty tank of Cardinal Tetras catches their eye, or they are given a tank as a birthday present, or something along those lines. But in the

end, most folks decide to set up a tank after having seen one.

Some people progress, getting bigger and/or more tanks and keeping additional fish. A few will get the addiction bug and do what I and most of my fish pals do--keep more than 10 tanks. Some will be delighted when a pair of livebearers breed. Others may actually go down the fish breeding path, setting up racks of tanks (each turned sideways) and hatching brine shrimp up the ying yang.

Some may even put a few stems of aquatic plants into their tank, usually only to be frustrated a month later when they all die.

There are not too many people, however, who will join a fish club without having any fish, or walk into a fish store, see a beautifully planted Discus display tank, and then walk out with a 90 gallon tank, Flourite, plants, CO2, compact fluorescent lighting, etc., and start the process of setting up a 90 gallon, heavily-planted Discus tank as their very first tank.

But that's exactly what I did!
A pair of stunning discus!

With the exception of my planted community tank in my office, nearly all my home tanks are big planted Discus show tanks. I admit that I do have a planted Angelfish tank and a planted Rainbowfish tank, but with-

out a doubt, my "thang" is planted Discus tanks. Hence, to those who say Discus are only for experienced hobbyists, or planted tanks should not be attempted by the novice aquarist, I say LIGHTEN UP! I'm not claiming it is EASY, but it's also not rocket science. The bottom line to success in keeping either Discus or plants is that you can't cut corners. You have to give them exactly what they want, when they want it. Failure to be as disciplined as that will result in problems. But for someone like me who is anal, an avid reader, not afraid to ask questions, and likes the challenge of doing the "impossible" well, it was a no-brainer that I'd start with a big planted Discus tank.

When I told my new found fish pals that I was going to start with that tank, every one of them expressed either horror at the notion or displayed an "all knowing" smirk with a nod as if to say, "Sure Alesia, you go and do that. In 3 months when all your plants are dead, your water green, and your Discus long gone to Discus Heaven, come see me and we'll start you with a tank of African Cichlids."

Fast forward two years later, and not only do I have that same tank with the same Discus (they now spawn in the tank), I also grow a number of red plants and have other plants that produce beautiful flowers. My point being, anything is possible if you set your mind to it, learn as much as you can and stay focused. It also doesn't hurt that I'm not afraid

to make a mistake or ask for help if I'm in a corner. Back when I was into Salsa dancing and getting ready for a competition, my instructor would have my partner and I do some pretty complicated moves. When we were first learning them, we'd perform them in an awkward way and I'd get frustrated. My coach would smile and say, "You have to be prepared to look kinda stupid in order to eventually dance like a winner."

That philosophy stuck with me, so I decided if I wanted big rewards I'd have to take big risks. Hence, bring on the plants, the lighting, the CO2, and the Discus! Beautiful discus like this one can be kept quite successfully in a planted tank.

Conscientious Aquarist has asked me to write about what I know within this delightful hobby. Therefore, my articles will primarily be about three different subject matters: plants, discus, and planted discus tanks. If that sounds redundant, trust me it is not. Most (but certainly not all) folks who keep Discus do so in bare bottom tanks. It's one way to keep discus, but it's not the way I've chosen to keep them. And let's face it, planted tanks have come into fashion these days thanks to Mr. Amano. Oh, they were always around, in fact they were around from the beginning of fish keeping thanks to their ability to keep the water in great shape, but they weren't really popular. Now that they are, it is indeed SO much easier to keep them prospering and beautiful thanks to the advances

made in technology. Lighting, CO2, substrate, fertilizers, etc. have all made planted tanks much easier to maintain. So if you are sick of having to say "NO" when people ask you if your plants are real, scraping algae off everything in your tank every week, or if you simply want a true living piece of art in your den, I'll help you get there even if you don't have a 'knack' with plants. Trust me, it won't matter. I have actually PROVEN it! EVERY land plant I have ever had has died, but my aquatic plants flourish!

Over time I'll also help you to understand all the lingo, gizmos, and strategies that go with planted tanks. The thing to remember now is this: there is no ONE way of having a planted tank. Some folks use CO2, some folks don't. I'll help you discover which is right for YOU!

And, if you've ever thought about having Discus or if you had them once a while ago and it just didn't work out, I'll also be writing on my experiences with these truly remarkable fish.

To start off this series of articles, I'll begin with a question I get asked all the time from plant wannabes: "Is it expensive to get into planted tanks?"

The answer is no. Or yes?

Actually, it all depends.

The definite "maybe" is an answer that drives me nuts! As someone who makes decisions instantly every day in business, I don't like "gray" thinking. Black or white, yes or no. Please don't give me that "kinda" response. Yet here I am giving it to you! Why? Because it is like everything else for sale these days. There are high end methods and low end methods. You can buy a car for \$15,000 or you can buy one for \$150,000. The choice is yours and you'll know which way you'll want to go based on prior track records. Love having all the latest tech PC equipment, digital camera models, etc? Well, you're probably going to want all those cool gizmos and advanced doodads. And yep, that can get pricey.

However, I will go on record right here and now in stating that having a planted tank does NOT have to be expensive. Honest, honest, honest! What it does require (more than anything else), is research/knowledge and a strategy. If you learn about this aspect of the hobby BEFORE you take action, you will save yourself tons of money, grief, wasted time, and ultimately, aggravation. The number one reason people fail with plants in their tank is because they have no knowledge of what it takes to make them grow. The simple rule to a beautiful, thriving planted tank is to know what the plants require and then give it to them. It really is that simple, and there is no one reading this that can't have a magnificent planted tank if she/he wants one and does what is needed.

Once the few requirements of the plants are met they will reward you a thousand times over with their incredible drop-dead beauty.

Next time: “What the heck are plants’ requirements and how do I meet them?” And, “What is the truth about all those horror stories about keeping Discus?”

If you’ve got a high resolution picture of a planted tank, a Discus tank, or a planted Discus tank, email it to me with your name, city/state, and a little information about the tank--how long it has been set up, the inhabitants, what equipment you use, etc. I’d much prefer to feature readers’ tanks in my articles, instead of my own.

And until next time, keep it under water!

For the complete article check out:
<http://www.wetwebmedia.com/ca/volume_1/cav1i2/plants_discus/plants_discus.htm>