



March 27, 2007

tideline aquatics Newsletter

Tideline Aquatics Store Hours

Monday – Friday 11am-7pm
Saturday 10am-6pm
Sundays 1pm-5pm

MALE OR FEMALE? KNOWING THE SEX OF YOUR FISH

When purchasing fish for your aquarium, often you ask us to capture you a pair – meaning a male and a female. This week we will cover how to sex some of the more common species available for your aquarium. In the marine aquarium, often it is impossible to keep two of the same species together but there are exceptions. In some fish, they may not be male or female when you purchase them!

Freshwater Livebearers:



MALE PLATY – GONOPODIUM CIRCLED

Nearly everyone has owned one of the more common livebearing species in their aquarium at one point or another. These include swordtails and platies (*Xiphophorus* sp.), mollies and guppies (*Poecilia* species). Understand there are

many other livebearers but for space we will discuss this small group of fish. These fish may be easily sexed just by a quick glance with some males having more elaborate fins but the true sexing can be done by a taking a closer look. Male platies, mollies, swordtails and guppies all have a male sex organ, the gonopodium. When you look into an aquarium full of livebearers during your next visit, you will clearly see the difference between male and female livebearers. The females will lack this elongated stick-like anal fin. If you do not want these fish to reproduce in the aquarium, purchase only male livebearers as the female can store the sperm from the male and have several clutches of babies from only one encounter! For best results with breeding, choose one male and two or three females to prevent the male from harassing just one female all of the time.

Gouramis:



MALE DWARF GOURAMI (*COLISA LALIA*)

Gouramis are one of the hardiest fish you can add to the aquarium but if you make

the mistake of adding all males, you will likely find them constantly fighting one another. To prevent too much confrontation, add at least two females for every male in the aquarium. With commonly sold Blue, Gold, Platinum, Pearl and Opaline Gouramis (all *Trichogaster* sp.), the males have a longer and pointed dorsal fin (top fin) while the female dorsal fin is more short and rounded. With dwarf gouramis (*Colisa* sp), the males also have a more pointed dorsal fin but the females are also often dull in color compared with the vivid patterns on the males. Gouramis are bubble nest builders. Males pick off tiny bits of plant material and place them in a quiet area on the surface of the aquarium. He will begin blowing bubbles that he will place among the plant material so when a female is ready for spawning, he can fertilize the eggs and place them into the bubble nest.

Clownfish:



TRUE PERCULA CLOWNS (*AMPHIPRION PERCULA*)

Now here is something nature has done to ensure the survival of a species. Clownfish are born without a gender! Juvenile clownfish will grow to become whatever is needed to ensure that a pair can develop. When purchasing a pair of juvenile clownfish, the two fish will begin to mature slowly. You will notice that one of the clowns will outgrow the other. The

larger of the two becomes the female and the smaller clown becomes a male. The two fish may be together for years yet if, for example, the female were to die and another smaller clownfish was accepted by the former male, the new fish will become the male and the former male will become the female – WOW. The more dominant fish will always become the female (sound familiar?). Once a clownfish matures into a female, it cannot ‘go back’ and become a male. That said, if you want to purchase larger clownfish, be sure you only purchase one unless you add a very small partner that can become the male.

Lysmata Marine Shrimp:



PEPPERMINT SHRIMP (*LYSMATA WURDERMANI*)

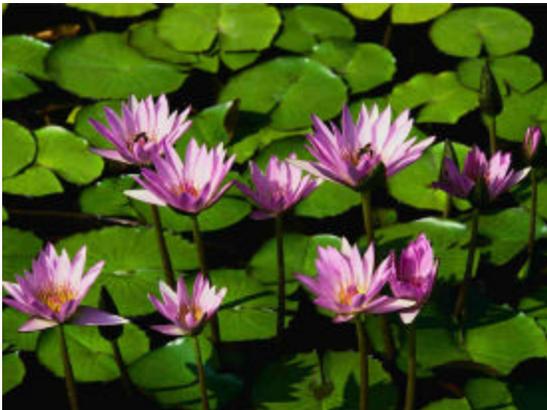
The most commonly available *Lysmata* shrimp include the Caribbean Peppermint Shrimp, the Skunk Cleaner Shrimp and the Red Fire Shrimp. These shrimp are all hermaphroditic meaning they possess both male and female sexual organs. As small juveniles, they pose as males fertilizing the eggs of larger females. These same males will later be fully functional reproductive females as they mature! Fertile eggs will have a more green appearance (as pictured above) while infertile eggs will be more golden in color. Fertile eggs will actually hatch in the aquarium though they would require

special care in order to mature into adults. Instead, the planktonic fry make excellent natural food for your corals and filter feeding organisms in the reef aquarium. The females will dart about the aquarium releasing the tiny fry shrimp from their swimmerets located just under the tail of the shrimp. Even unfertile eggs will make good food items for your coral inhabitants!

THE TIDELINE AQUATICS WEBSITE FORUM

Ask questions, share ideas or just chat with fellow aquarists using the Tideline Aquatics forum. We are also posting 'Helpful Hints' for you to reference concerning different aspects of aquarium husbandry.

REPOTTING WATER GARDEN PLANTS



Water garden plants are beginning to sprout from their winter dormancy. Now is the time to repot them – before they develop into full sized plants. We carry the special soil required for growing pond plants as regular soils contain fertilizers and soil amendments that are not for use with aquatic plants. We also have the special pots that should be used when repotting water garden plants. Your root bound plants should be removed from their smaller pots and the root ball should

be gently broken up. Place the plant into the larger pot and pack the pond plant soil tightly around the plant. Slowly add water to the pot outside of the pond. Allow the plant soil to settle and then add some large rock (often referred to as pea gravel) to the top of the soil to prevent the fish from digging in the pot. Cut away any dead plant leaves and dead wood from the plant. Add about two pond plant fertilizer tablets per gallon of soil to the plant and slowly submerge it back into the pond. Your plants will produce larger leaves and many more flowers if they are not root bound in small pots from the previous season. By using shorter, broad based pots, the plants are less likely to be blown over during windy days.

LOCAL CLUBS / ORGANIZATIONS

Have a reef aquarium? Check out our local reef club at: www.charlestonreefers.org

Love water gardens and koi? Visit the Charleston Showa Koi Club website at:

www.charlestonshowakoiclub.org

Saltwater fish aquarium club – CMAC

www.columbiamac.org

Question and Answer Forum –

www.wetwebmedia.com

Question and Answer Forum –

www.tidelineaquatics.net

Fish of the Week



BICOLOR BLENNY (ECSENIUS BICOLOR)

With a face like a character from a Dr. Seuss Book, the Bicolor Blenny may not be the most brightly colored addition to a marine aquarium but it certainly makes up for it with personality. We have a large number of these hardy blennies scheduled to arrive on Wednesday afternoon. These blennies are arriving to us from Sri Lanka where many species collected there are more brightly colored than the same fish collected from other areas. These were listed as “all males” but we have read that the color pattern does not necessarily mean anything when sexing this species. Bicolor blennies bounce about the tank munching on algae but will accept all sorts of prepared frozen and flake foods. It is suggested that you include an algae-based food in the diet for these fish. We have mixed feelings on whether this fish is reef safe or not. I know of several individuals that found this fish nipping at the mantle of their tridacna clams and had to remove them from their reef. In the community aquarium, the bicolor blenny is hardy and bold. Avoid keeping this blenny with similar blennies like Algae Blennies as they may fight with one another. Print off the coupon at: www.tidelineaquatics.net

What's New This Week

FEEDERS: (NOW IN STOCK)

Live Black Worms, Crayfish, Rosy Reds (LIMITED), Feeder Goldfish (LIMITED), Fiddler Crabs, Feeder Guppies and Feeder Ghost Shrimp.

FRESHWATER FISH (ARRIVED ON TUESDAY AFTERNOON):

Dalmation Mollies, Assorted Sailfin Mollie Pairs, Male Bettas (excellent color selection), Geophagus altifrons Eartheaters, Assorted Mbuna African Cichlids (an excellent mix of affordable cichlids), Red Cherry Barbs, Otocinclus Algae Eaters, Albino Chocolate Plecostomus, M/L Tiretrack Eels (very nice markings on these), Australian Gold Desert Gobies (unusual), Figure Eight Pufferfish, Green Spotted Pufferfish, South American Freshwater Stingrays, Red Belly X-Ray Tetras (New!). We have the best selection of freshwater fish in town!

NEW SHIPMENT OF LIVE AQUATIC AQUARIUM PLANTS NOW IN STOCK!!

POND – KOI, GOLDFISH AND WATER GARDEN PLANTS (ALL ARRIVING ON FRIDAY):

Small Assorted Color Domestic Koi, Medium Assorted Domestic Koi, Large Assorted Domestic Koi, Large Assorted Butterfly Koi, Pearlscale Goldfish, Blue Orandas, Calico Orandas, Red and White Orandas, Ryukins, Butterfly Telescope Goldfish, Black Moors, Our Huge Shipment of Water Garden Plants Arrive Friday!! – We should be completely stocked for the pond season. Japanese Koi are expected on April 5th!

SALTWATER FISH (EXPECTED ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON):

Tank Bred True Black Ocellaris Clownfish, Tank Bred Fridmani Pseudochromis, Fiji Coral Beauty Angelfish, Baby Hawaiian Flame Angelfish, Sea of Cortez Blue Spot Jawfish, Sumatra Ocellaris Clownfish, Indian Ocean Tomato Clownfish, Indian Ocean Orange Skunk Clownfish Pairs,

Sumatra Gold Bar Clownfish, African Allardi Clownfish, Indian Ocean Black & White Heniochus Butterflyfish, Sri Lanka Bicolor Blennies, Indian Ocean Firefish Gobies, Indian Ocean Rainfordi Gobies, Mexico Long Nose Hawkfish, Hawaiian Fuzzy Dwarf Lionfish, Indian Ocean Black Volitan Lionfish, Fiji Orangetail Blue Spot Sharpnose Pufferfish, Sumatra Clown Triggerfish, Indian Ocean Desjardini Sailfin Tangs, Indian Ocean Common Sailfin Tangs, Hawaiian Naso Tangs, Sri Lanka Clown Tangs, Indian Ocean Powder Brown Tangs, Bali Yellow Mimic Tangs, Indian Ocean Powder Blue Tangs, Indian Ocean McCoster's Fairy Wrasses, Hawaiian Potters Wrasses, Bali Harlequin Tusk Fish, Tank Bred Kelloggii Seahorses.

**SALTWATER INVERTEBRATES
(EXPECTED ON WEDNESDAY):**

Hawaiian Feather Dusters, Sri Lanka Fire Shrimp, Cortez Red Tip Reef Hermits, Mexican Turbo Snails, Super Red Mushroom Rocks, Green Daisy Polyp Rocks, Super Green Star Polyp Rocks, Fiji Yellow Devil Hand Leather Corals, Fiji Green Mumps Leather Corals, Indo Umbrella Toadstool Leather Corals, Spiny Cup Pectinia Corals (we ordered lots!!), Indo Bubble Corals, Super Red Blasstomussa Corals, Cynarina Meat Corals, Bright Orange Echinata Corals, Green Wellsophylia Corals.

We have an excellent supply of Fiji Live Rock and incredible corals now in stock!!

From Our Customer Photo Gallery:



MARK LECOUTER'S PUFFED UP PORCUPINE PUFFER

Please keep our customer photo gallery fresh by sending me your photos for posting. Share your aquarium inhabitants by including your photos in our website photo gallery! Send your photos to: chris@tidelineaquatics.net