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How to care for your Siamese Fighting Fish

Please read the following closely, it is important to the health of your new pet :

- Siamese Fighters (Bettas) ideally do not like their water temperature to fluctuate, or to go below 18 degrees Celsius (24-26 degrees being optimal). So in cooler weather you must keep them in the warmest room of the house, or ask about our range of small heaters or heat mats. Do not worry about bubbles accumulating on the top of your Fighter's tank. This is a bubble nest, and it just means he is ready to breed.
- Small tanks are ideal for Fighters because: they have a labyrinth breathing system (so they do not need oxygen in the water like most fish), you are trying to simulate nature (where they often live in the footprints of the water buffalo), and they are extremely territorial and like to defend their tiny environment aggressively. Every few days you can put a small mirror against your Fighter's tank. He will attack his reflection, keeping himself exercised and stimulated. Keep a lid on the tank, or do not fill it right up to the top (Fighters can jump).
- Betta Food pellets, dried bloodworms, tubifex worms, frozen blood worms etc, should all be mixed together to vary your Fighter's diet as much as possible (they do not eat flakes). The first sign of your Fighter needing more variety is the regular eating of plants or having long hanging faeces.
- Though there is a lot of misinformation around, ideally you should feed your Fighter 3 times per day. But do not overfeed, everything must be eaten in 2 minutes and none should ever sink to the bottom (approximately 2-3 pellets). Like all fish, Fighters are grazers, and need lots of little feeds, not one big one. Any food that sinks to the bottom is not eaten later, they just rot and cloud the tank.
- You must change one third of your water every week (or a 1/3 every 2 weeks in larger tanks). Changing too much water is damaging, as it removes the natural bacteria that break down the Fighter's waste products (ammonia).

There are three essential steps to turning tap water into aquarium water:

- 1) Firstly, Fighter Safe or Stress Coat is used every time tap water is added. It removes the chlorine, fluoride and heavy metals, which kill Fighters. Alternatively you can use Aquatopia's pre mixed fighter water. Do not use filtered water, as it does not have enough natural bacteria and is too soft (not enough minerals) for Fighters.
- 2) Secondly, Biostart or Stress Zyme provides the natural bacteria that break down the toxic ammonia, which Fighters secrete. This bacteria takes 8 weeks to build up naturally.
- 3) Finally, add a fighter conditioning tablet to help keep your fighters water stable and crystal clear (especially in the first few weeks). It also adds vitamins and minerals which strengthen their immune system.

To do the water change:

- 1) First, put the fighter fish with 2/3 of the old into a separate container.
 - 2) With the old water, stir around the gravel in the tank to aerate the gravel and bring up all the settled waste. Discard the 1/3 after the gravel has been stirred up. Do not rinse your gravel under tap water because it will remove any the good bacteria which keeps the water clean.
 - 3) Add the fish with the 2/3rds of the old water back to the tank.
 - 4) Put the new water in the tank after it has been dechlorinated. The water may appear cloudy at first but will settle town in 15 – 30 minutes.
- Live plants oxygenate, break down ammonia, absorb excess nutrients that algae live on, give hiding places for Fighters. Take off the lead, which is holding the bunch together.
 - Gravel is necessary to help with filtration. You should always wash the gravel really well before placing it in the tank.
 - Ornaments, rocks and silk or plastic plants decorate your tank and entertain Fighters, while giving places to hide.
 - Special non-rusting aquatic lights and aquatic bulbs, encourage plants to grow, and make Fighters more active and appear much more colourful (turn off at night).
 - Weekend and Vacation feeders are not ideal for Fighters, but they can be used when you go away, and fresh plants should also be placed into tanks as a back up.
 - Algae Fix, live plants, limiting light, and live snails are most effective for combating algae.
 - A net should always be used, never touch your Fighter with your hand.

The above information is only meant as a guide, and you should not hesitate to contact our helpful staff if you have any problems or concerns.