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DISCUS

Due to their magnificent colours and graceful nature, discus are known as the kings of the freshwater aquarium. Many people are under the impression that discus are a difficult fish to keep in an aquarium, however this myth is not true.

Although discus can be kept successfully in community tanks, the best results are obtained when they are kept in a quiet species tank with a number of discus and some tetra species. Some of the best species to keep with your Discus are Cardinal Tetras, Bleeding Heart Tetras, Silver Tip Tetras, Clown Loaches and Pristella Tetras. A few general clean up fish like bristle noses and corydoras cats are also sensible additions. The reason for this is that discus are a naturally gentle fish, unsuited for the chaotic lifestyle shown in some other fish. Also, the ideal water conditions for discus are a bit different to what is used for most other community fish.

The tank conditions in which discus thrive most, are moderate to heavily planted tanks with plenty of woodwork, High water temperatures (28~30 °C), acid to neutral pH 6.2 – 7.0, soft water (100ppm.) and lower light intensities.

Discus show their best colour markings and growth rates when fed on a regular basis. Feeding rates of 1-2 times daily on beef heart, bloodworms, brine shrimp and discus mix are recommended particularly during the first 6 – 9 months of the fishes' lives. This is when the vast majority of the fishes' growth occurs. Due to these large feeding rates, good filtration and regular water changes with the aid of a gravel cleaner (at least thirty percent once a week) are necessary.

When setting up your discus tank, it should be designed with tall plants and woodwork in the ends of the tank to cover filters, heaters, etc. and to provide a safe haven for the fish, but the rest of the tank should only have low lying plants such as Amazon Swords and grass pots as to provide adequate space for the fish to display their fully majestic colours.

Although keeping discus is not a difficult task, breeding can be a matter of pot luck. This is due to the fact that the young fish feed directly from the parent fishes' bodies, and therefore success can be dependant on your fish being good parents. If you want to know more about keeping Discus at home, just ask any of the staff at Reef to River Aquatics and we will be glad to help.