

## Tropical Fish Buying Rules

Written by

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A few things to consider when buying fish. 1) Do your research.

Buying fish is a clear case of, "buyer beware". It is best to assume that fish store employees know little more than the tag, on the tank. Tags which may, or may not, be accurate. It is, ultimately, up to you to make sure you can care for the fish you want. You will want to find out: how big, what do they eat and preferred water conditions. Do they have special needs? Are they compatible with other fish? You should also check on the general habits of new fish.

It's a good idea to find out the parameters of the fish store's water. Radical changes can stress your new fish. If there is a large difference between your water and the store's water, you must take that into account when introducing your new fish. One way is to match your QT's water, to that of the store. Then, you can slowly change conditions to match your display tank. Remember, the larger the change, the longer it takes.

It is preferable to select fish that suit the environment you can provide. General questions include: minimum tank size, pH range, hard/soft water, habitat choice (rocks? plants? bright/subdued lighting?) to name a few. Utilize every source you can find. If you're checking out FishGeeks, you're half way there!

2) Never buy a sick fish.

I carefully inspect all potential purchases. I also like to arrange to see the fish eat. Then, I like to have the store hold them, for a few days. Then, I inspect them more carefully when I go pick them up. Having a fish "held" is not always possible. However, it doesn't hurt to ask. You can wait a few days and take the chance someone will buy the fish you want. It is, also, best to avoid fish that have just arrived at the store. Many fish succumb to stress during shipment.

3) Never buy a fish, from a "sick tank".

Sick tank: A tank which contains dead/dying fish. Always check the fish you don't want. If the store uses a common filter, on it's tanks, you want to check the whole system. Or, find a different store.

4) Quarantine!!!

A minimum 2 week quarantine should be followed. I prefer a month. If a quarantined fish needs treatment, wait until it's symptom free for, at least, two weeks.

5) Never put a sick fish in your tank.

If you follow 1-4; this one is automatic.

A note about quarantine:

A quarantine/hospital tank (QT) is the best investment a fish-keeper can make. And, it's a small investment! It is, simply, a holding tank. A place to hold, and observe, your new fish.

ANY "food safe" container will do. However, a 10gal. aquarium (from the cheapest source) is hard to beat. Add a pump, filter or air-stone, then "seed" it with some stuff

(gravel, rocks, decorations or filter media) from your established tank and, you're "good to go". You can, also, go with a more "sterile" QT and depend on water changes, for waste control.

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There is no need to keep your QT running, when not in use.

Keep in mind that ANYTHING that comes into contact with your QT MUST be treated as INFECTED. ALL equipment must be sterilized before it's used on other tanks.

The best way to treat disease is to avoid it. I have followed these steps, for 10 years, or more. I have not lost a fish, to disease, in that time. Except for a single "kribenses" while in QT.