

# JANUARY NEWS

from **NIELSEN'S MARINE MATES**

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Welcome to our first newsletter for 2015. We hope you all had a great time over the holiday season and managed to fit in some fishkeeping. The Christmas/New Year break is always a great time to renovate your fish tank or set up the new one you got for Christmas and we have really good stocks of marine and freshwater fish, corals and other inverts and freshwater plants available, along with great advice on all aspects of fishkeeping. So, Happy New Year to you all and as always until next month ... good fishkeeping!

## FRESHWATER PLANT OF THE MONTH – BLUE STRICTA

This has been featured recently as our plant of the month, but because it is so popular and is looking great we are offering it again. Blue Stricta is a hardy bunch plant which makes a great backdrop for lower growing plants. It will grow to the top of the water (and above) in most aquariums and can be pinched out at the top to encourage growth low down. The green colouration will vary from dark to lime according to lighting conditions. As with most bunch plants, Blue Stricta grows from a cutting. Although it can be planted in a bunch, good results come from it being separated out and pieces planted close together, but individually.



Regularly \$6.50 bunch.

**THIS MONTH \$5.50 BUNCH.**

## FRESHWATER FISH OF THE MONTH BLACK WIDOW TETRAS

The Tetra family would have to be one of the most popular choices for the tropical freshwater community tank. One of the larger growing tetras is the Black Widow Tetra. These are a very hardy fish and have a lot to recommend them, being quite peaceful, easy to feed, very undemanding of water conditions and an attractive fish. Black Widows may take a little time to develop the deep black colouration when new in a tank, but once settled, and especially in a planted tank, will display good colour – black with metallic silver. Black Widows can be kept in pairs or in a school. They have a more round body shape than most tetras so make a good contrast to more slender tetras such as neons, glowlights, black neons etc. Their larger size also means they can be mixed with some of the larger tropical fish such as angelfish which would normally be a problem with smaller tetras.

Feeding Black Widow Tetras is easy as they will accept almost any foods from flake to frozen.

Normally \$4.50

**JANUARY SPECIAL ONLY \$2.99**

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Check out our Facebook page which is regularly updated with lots of photos of new livestock and products as they arrive. 'Like us' to receive notification of updates.



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## **GROWING CORALLINE ALGAE IN YOUR MARINE AQUARIUM**

Reef keepers will often refer to 'live rock' which begs the question: "how can a rock be live?" Live rock is basically calcareous rock encrusted with live coralline algae. Coralline algae is the pink and purple encrustation growing on the rock and even on the glass of the aquarium. These are the most common colours, although others such as yellow, orange and white occur. Although it feels quite hard, it is a living plant life.



To grow coralline algae in your tank you need to seed the tank by either introducing living rock already colonized by coralline algae or by taking scrapings of coralline algae from another tank. Usually only a small amount is necessary.

Coralline algae requires good water quality for it to thrive. Phosphates and nitrates should be as close to zero as possible, calcium levels are best kept between 410-450mg/lit (ppm) and an optimum carbonate hardness level of 3meq/lit (150ppm/8.4°dKh) is recommended. Keep ph in the range of normal seawater (8.2).

High dissolved phosphate levels inhibit the growth of coralline algae (and corals) and favour the growth of nuisance algae, as does high waste levels (nitrates). Grazing fish and inverts such as snails, tangs, foxface and reef friendly hermit crabs encourage coralline algae by consuming competing fast growing nuisance algae.

Coralline algae have a life cycle that determines the speed of formation of new colonies. Different species of coralline algae may grow

at different rates. It is not unusual to take several months for pink and purple coralline algae to reach rapid growth rates. Once established in an aquarium, coralline algae will often not only colonize rock but also establish intricate tiers of plates on any available surface.

There is much debate about lighting requirements and it seems that whilst some types of coralline algae require quite high lighting levels, others will grow easily in dark areas, even inside skimmer boxes, protein skimmers etc.

There are a number of products to enhance the growth of coralline algae, remembering that no product will produce it without first seeding the tank. **CaribSea Purple Up** is one such product. It may be useful



to use a calcium supplement to raise the levels initially and use the Purple Up to maintain the levels and encourage coralline algae growth. Secondly

is **Continuum's Coralline Purple CX**. This is an aragonite based product and should be shaken up vigorously before using.



Lastly is **Red Sea's Kh Coralline Gro**.

This, as with all of these products, is best used in conjunction with carbonate hardness testing. Also some of these products will cloud the tank initially, so dosing at night is recommended along with strong water flow to help dissolve the treatment.



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## NEW PROTEIN SKIMMER FOR LARGER MARINE AQUARIUMS



Now in stock are the **Wavereef Protein Skimmers** which use a 25W eco pump and are highly efficient for aquariums up to 600 litres.

Features are:

pin wheel pump with integrated controller for adjusting power and venturi intake that produces just the right amount and size of air bubbles;



a bubble plate to reduce the turbulence in the reaction chamber;

a curved cone skimmer body that allows the foam to smoothly rise to the collection cup;

an air silencer to ensure quiet operation;

a quick release collection cup for ease of cleaning;

a collection cup drain to reduce the frequency of maintenance;

a compact size for easy installation – height 56cm, footprint 20cm x 20cm.

In store now and recommended for marine tanks up to 600 litres. **\$655.**

### CAN I USE A PROTEIN SKIMMER IN A FRESHWATER TANK?

Whilst protein skimming would be beneficial in freshwater aquariums, since freshwater is less dense than salt water, fine bubbles required to foam the water are not produced in freshwater and so unfortunately commonly available skimmers do not operate efficiently in a freshwater aquarium.

## WHITE CRANE FOODS

These foods are outstanding colour enhancers and the colour achieved with White Crane foods is



amazing, especially in view of the short time required to see results. It is outstanding for use with cichlids but can be used with all types of freshwater fish including goldfish. We are stocking two types of White Crane foods:

**Super R** has PSB and Astaxanthin and will enhance red colours on all kinds of fish which have a red colour base. Fish



colour improvement can be noticed in as little as seven days. Feed your fish daily for a few weeks until high colour is achieved and then decrease to once or twice a week to maintain the colour. Alternatively, mix a little in with regular food and feed daily.

**Super G** with PSB and Spirulina is the one to use for fish with a blue (particularly Electric Blue cichlids), green, black, platinum or yellow colour base. Feeding regime is the same as for Super R.



Both foods are available in 50g for \$12.95.

### FEELING THE HEAT?

If your reef tank does not have a chiller, then, with the heat we are having, your aquarium is at serious risk of crashing. Reef tanks can be beautiful one day and dead the next! Ideal temperature for live coral is 24°C. Once tank temperatures reach 30°C or above, damage is usually irreversible. Check out our chillers TODAY!



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## KEEPING SEA ANEMONES

Perhaps one of the more enjoyable sights in a marine aquarium is the interaction between a clownfish and its anemone. The relationship between fish and invertebrate is well



known. Whilst clown fish are considered one of the easiest marine fish to keep, many

aquarists struggle to keep anemones for any length of time. Commonly, anemones will be described as 'losing colour' or 'shrinking in size', before dying. Apart from the necessity for great water quality, there are a few reasons for this and some possible remedies.

As with corals, anemones have an algae (zooxanthellae) living within their tissue. Zooxanthellae use light and carbon dioxide to produce food by photosynthesis, some of which is utilized by the anemone. If the zooxanthellae die or leave the anemone, the anemone will become a translucent white colour and this ultimately leads to its death unless steps are quickly taken to remedy the situation. So it can be seen that the first important element in keeping an anemone is **lighting**. Should your anemone show signs of loss of colour, first look at increasing the amount of lighting and possibly the length of time the lighting is run (around twelve hours per day is required). The second element which can cause much the same results is **heat**. Both zooxanthellae and anemones are quite sensitive to heat and ideally the aquarium should be maintained at 24°C, usually with the use of a chiller in summer. An anemone shrinking in size, usually is an indication that it

is STARVING. Anemones **NEED TO BE FED** around twice per week even if there is zooxanthellae present. If the anemone is hosting a clownfish then it may not be necessary to feed this often as the clownfish will usually take food into the anemone. Fresh or frozen foods can be used for feeding. Use chopped shrimp, fish, any fleshy seafood and drop a small piece lightly into the tentacles of the anemone. Do not place it in the mouth as this can cause the anemone to close up. If the anemone is reluctant to take the food, it can be stimulated to grab it by gently teasing the tentacles with the food. Always check that the anemone has taken and eaten the food and remove any uneaten portions promptly. It is worth noting that if the mouth of the anemone is constantly gaping open, this is a sign that all is not well. Anemones do expel waste through the mouth which will be open wide at this time but this should only be a temporary occurrence.

Provide the right conditions as outlined above and you will enjoy your anemone for many years.

## MARINE SPECIAL OF THE MONTH – BUBBLE ANEMONES

To coincide with the previous article we are offering the beautiful bubble anemone as our special of the month.

Clownfish will not adopt just any type of anemone as their home but this type seems to be amongst their favourites.

Normally \$55.00 each.

**NEW YEAR/JANUARY SPECIAL \$45.00 EACH.**

