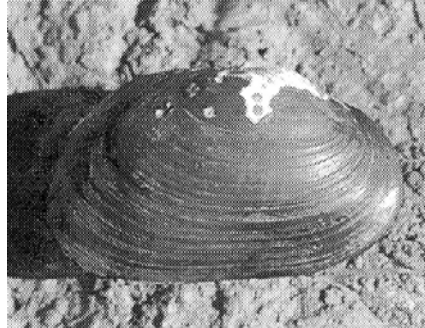


# Care Sheet

## FRESHWATER MUSSELS



**TEMPERATURE:** Freshwater mussels are equally comfortable in tropical or cold water.

**WATER:** They are not fussy about the type of water they live in, as long as it is relatively unpolluted and oxygen rich.

**FOOD:** Feeding and breathing is accomplished by sucking water and micro-organisms in through openings between the shells. The result of this is extremely clear water as the mussel acts as a living filter. The gills are situated inside the bivalves.

There are many species of Freshwater mussels and they make interesting aquarium subjects. They are protected by two shells (Bivalves) hinged by a tough, elastic membrane. They move about by protruding a broad, tongue-shaped muscle (the foot) into the sand, then pulling themselves slowly forward. This process may dislodge plants in newly set up aquariums.

They are best known in the aquarium hobby for their role in protecting and incubating eggs of the popular Bitterling, which lay their eggs in the breathing opening of the mussel.