

Community Fish and Aquariums— Your Guide



What is a Community Fish?

A “community fish” has the ability to coexist peacefully with a variety of other species, some of which do not necessarily share the same origins or geographic locations.

Aquariums that contain these fish are often referred to as “community tanks”. In this guide we will focus on what it takes to be a community fish and suggest some AI recommended layouts for you to try at home.

Plan Ahead!

Always research your fish. Knowing what kind of requirements your fish need will allow you to make decisions about suitable tank mates. When creating a community tank, your aim is to bring fish together that are compatible in temperament, water parameters and other factors such as feeding requirements.

Our website (aquariumindustries.com.au) contains hundreds of care sheets which detail the individual care requirements of many community fish, and makes a great place to start your research.

Expert Tip: *One of the factors often overlooked when choosing fish for a community aquarium is the level at which the fish prefer to swim. Choosing fish that prefer swimming at different levels will result in a far more attractive aquarium, while at the same time assuring that your fish will not have to compete for space, food or territory. This results in a happier community, and a more visually appealing tank.*

Suitable Fish

This section contains a small number of fish that will live happily in a mixed tropical community aquarium, are not usually too aggressive and do not have any unusual dietary or water quality requirements.

Tetras and Rasboras

Most species are small, peaceful and produce minimal waste, making them one of the most popular fish for community tanks. Given their size, the addition of large tank mates is best avoided. Tetras and Rasboras will tend to swim at a medium to high/surface level within the aquarium.

We recommend:

- Neon Tetra *Paracheirodon innesi*,
- Rummy nose Tetra *Hemigrammus bleheri*,
- Cardinal Tetra *Paracheirodon axelrodi*,
- Serpae Tetra *Hyphessobrycon eques*,
- Glolite Tetra *Hemigrammus erythrozonus*,
- Harlequin Rasbora *Trigonostigma heteromorpha*,
- Hengels Rasbora *Trigonostigma hengeli*,
- Emerald-eye Rasbora *Rasbora dorsiocellata*

Livebearers (Guppies, Mollies, Swordtails and Platies)

These fish are commonly available and very popular. Most are hardy, easy to breed and bring instant colour to any tank. Best suited to higher pH and GH community tanks. Most livebearers live and feed along the surface.

We recommend:

- Guppy *Poecilia reticulata*,
- Molly *Poecilia latipinna*,
- Platy *Xiphophorus maculatus*
- Swordtail *Xiphophorus helleri*

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South American cichlids

There are a few species originating in South America that can be classed as community fish. Research on their temperament, required parameters and maximum size is advised, and you can find out more about individual species at aquariumindustries.com.au.

See below for a list of a few AI recommended community cichlids. South American cichlids will tend to swim along the bottom of aquariums, making them excellent for smaller tanks.

We recommend:

- Apistogramma sp,
- Red forest jewels *Hemichromis lifalili*,
- Severum *Heros severus*,
- Blue ramirezi *Mikrogeophagus ramirezi*,
- Bolivian butterfly *Mikrogeophagus altispinosa*,
- Pearl horseface *Geophagus brasiliensis*.

Marine Fish - Damsels

Damsel fish are the most common "starter" saltwater (marine) aquarium fish. They are considered good starters because they are inexpensive, and they adapt well to a variety of water conditions.

Although they make colourful additions to a saltwater community tank, it is always advised to keep them in schools of at least 5+ to limit the aggression that can occur as they develop.

We recommend:

- Blue/green chromis *Chromis viridis*,
- Blue line damsel *Chrysiptera caeruleolineata*,
- Damsel yellowtail blue *Chrysiptera parasema*,
- Blue devil damsel *Chrysiptera cyanea*,

More community fish

Barbs

These are an active and colourful addition to any community tank. Not all are peaceful, and some can grow quite large, so we suggest doing some research before purchasing.

The species listed below are ideal for the general community tanks. Note: best kept in schools to share any aggression.

We recommend:

- Cherry barb *Capoeta titteya*,
- Tiger barb *Capoeta tetrazona*,
- Rosy barb *Puntius Conchoniuis*.
- Odessa barb *Puntius ticto*.

Danios

These hardy fish and are active schoolers with no special requirements. Great for beginners.

We recommend:

- Zebra danio *Brachydanio rerio*,
- Leopard danio *Brachydanio frankei*,
- Pearl danio *Brachydanio albolineatus*.

Loaches

Loach species make an interesting addition to your community aquarium. These are best kept in groups.

We recommend:

- Clown loach *Chromobotia macracanthus*,
- Reticulate loach *Botia lohachata*,
- Kuhlii loach *Acanthopthalmus* sp.

Rainbow fish

Rainbow fish are strikingly colourful and are a great schooling fish. They are often overlooked as community fish, partly because the juveniles are normally not intensely coloured. Once grown they display their impressive adult colouration, which rivals that of most other fish.

We recommend:

- Neon rainbows *Melanotaenia praecox*,
- Boesemani rainbow *Melanotaenia boesemani*,
- Turquoise rainbow *Melanotaenia lacustris*,
- Red rainbow *Glossolepis incisus*,

Corydoras Catfish

Cory's are small, peaceful catfish, which are ideal for the community aquarium. The commonly available species are generally hardy and are very affordable.

We recommend:

- Bronze/Albino catfish *Corydoras aeneus*,
- Peppered catfish *Corydoras paleatus*,
- Panda Cory *Corydoras* sp. *Panda*,
- Sterbai Cory *Corydoras* sp. *Sterbai*.

Sucking Mouth Catfish

These species are great as part of your "clean-up crew", because they will eat algae, and any uneaten food particles, and are an excellent addition to any community tank.

We recommend:

- Bristle nose catfish *Ancistrus* sp.,
- Borneo sucker *Pseudogastromyzon myersi*,
- Sucking catfish *Gyrinocheilus aymonieri*,
- Pleco *Hypostomus plecostomus*.

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Gouramis

Colourful, hardy fish which are full of personality, gouramis make excellent community tank mates.

We recommend:

- Blue/golden gourami *Trichogaster trichopterus*,
- Pearl gourami *Trichogaster leeri*,
- Dwarf gourami *Colisa lalia*.

African cichlids

These fish are often not thought of as community fish due to their aggressive nature, but many species can live quite happily together. Best kept with other African cichlids.

We recommend:

- Electric yellow *Labidochromis caeruleus*,
- Benga peacock *Aulonocara baenschi*,
- Blue peacock *Aulonocara stuartgranti*,
- Eureka red peacock *A.jacobfreibergi*,
- Lombardoi *Metriaclima Lombardoi*,
- Cobalt blue Zebra *Metriaclima callainos*

Plants for the community tank

Plant species that are best suited to community tanks are generally hardier and more adaptive to a broader range of parameters. This list is of some of the most common and robust aquatic plants.

We recommend:

- Java fern *Microsorium pteropus*,
- *Anubias nana*,
- Java moss *Taxiphyllum barbieri*,
- Most *Cryptocoryne* species, especially
 - *Cryptocoryne Lucens*
 - *Cryptocoryne Balansae*
- Pygmy Chain Sword
- Broad Leaf Chain Sword
- Baby Tears
- Green Pennywort
- Gold Pennywort
- Brown Wendtii

Expert tip: This is where tissue culture plants, such as those from the Naturals Range by Aquarium Industries have the edge on traditionally grown plants. Many Tissue Culture plants will adapt quickly, and there is no risk of introducing anything nasty into the aquarium such as snails, disease and algae!

Suggested Tank Composition

While the possibilities for community tanks are endless, we know that it can be hard when you are first setting out. To help you, we have created a few examples of attractive community tanks, that might provide some ideas.

Remember to do your research before starting, and ask your local store for advice. Before starting out, we also recommend that you read the following care sheets, found on our website:

1. Setting up a freshwater aquarium
2. New tank syndrome
3. Adding fish to the home aquarium

The recommendations below contain the number of fish you can hold in a fully cycled tank, and assume that your water parameters fall within our recommended guidelines.

50 litre tanks

The Tetra Tank: 50 litres

Tetras are great beginner community fish and schools of these fish are great at creating colour in the tank. Suited to neutral pH and soft water they are best when kept with species that show little to no aggression.

GloLite, Rummy nose and Neon tetras swim at mid to high levels of the tank, generally swimming in tight groups and flashing beautiful iridescent colours. These character filled species are very inquisitive and will often join the other fish up the top of the tank during feeding time. Add some corydoras to scavenge along the bottom of the tank, and complete the bottom level.

Suggested Fish and Quantities for a 50 litre tank:

- | | |
|--------------------|----|
| • Corydoras sp. | 5 |
| • Neon tetra | 10 |
| • Glolite tetra | 5 |
| • Rummy nose tetra | 5 |

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50 litre tanks (continued)

Soft water dwarf cichlid Tank: 50 litre

This is a great community tank for those wanting something a little different from the common tetra filled tank.

Apistogramma Cacatuoides are a beautiful fiery coloured dwarf cichlid with streaks of red, yellow and orange, which add a striking addition to any tank. They tend to swim between mid to bottom levels of the tank and are a great feature fish.

The harlequin rasbora is a little different, with a darker colour to the back half of its body. This fish schools nicely at a mid to high level of the tank.

Corydoras will fossick along the bottom of the tank.

All of these fish are great in a neutral pH and soft water tank.

Suggested Fish and Quantities for a 50 litre tank:

- Apistogramma Cacatuoides pair 2
- Harlequin rasbora 10
- Corydoras sp. 3

The Livebearer Tank: 50 litre

Livebearers are a brilliant choice for a community tank. There are many different colour options available and they are reasonably priced.

Adding guppies and balloon mollies will create an active environment that is very pleasing to the eye. Placing a few corydoras in as well will ensure the tank won't get too dirty.

Suggested Fish and Quantities for a 50 litre tank:

- Balloon mollies 5
- Guppies 10
- Corydoras 5

200 litre tanks

The Gourami Tank: 200 litre

The Gourami Tank is a nice setup if you are a beginner or an advanced aquarist. The feature fish of the aquarium will be the gouramis, so any fish added will be used to merely enhance the gouramis which are present.

The Pearl Gourami is a fish with plenty of personality and a pair of Dwarf Gouramis will complement this. Adding a few clown loach and barbs will create activity in the lower and mid-range of the aquarium, while a Bristlenose catfish will help you keep algae under control.

Suggested Fish and Quantities for a 200 litre tank:

- Pearl gourami 5
- Dwarf Gouramis 2
- Tiger barbs 20
- Bristlenose catfish 2
- Clown Loaches 4

The Malawi Cichlid Community Tank: 200 litre

This aquarium will be full of colour. A 200 litre tank provides room for quite a lot of medium-sized cichlids.

Keeping the aquarium well-stocked will actually reduce aggression, and it is best to purchase a number of fish at once instead of ones and twos to further limit aggression.

There are several suitable species commonly available and we have chosen a few to add to this aquarium. Select Blue, Benga and Eureka Red Peacocks (Note: selecting only males can help limit the need for territory) then a few cobalt blue zebras and electric yellows. To finish, add 2 - 4 Cuckoo catfish. The aquarium should be aquascaped using lots of rocks and hiding places.

Suggested Fish and Quantities for a 200 litre tank:

- Peacock Cichlids Blue 3
- Benga 3
- Eureka Red 3
- Cobalt blues 5
- Electric yellows 5
- Cuckoo catfish 2—4

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200 litre tanks (continued)

The River Community Tank: 200 litre

Setting up community tank with a theme is often a great place to start, as it will help you decide on the species you should look at. A river setting will be our focus when selecting these species.

With some rocks/pebbles and wood, the *Geophagus brasiliensis* or the pearl cichlid is right at home. We add a severum and some Congo tetras to school higher up in the water column, and then a few reticulated loaches to create an active and interesting aquarium.

Suggested Fish and Quantities for a 200 litre tank:

• Pearl cichlid	5
• Congo tetra	15
• Reticulate loach	4
• Green severum	1

Find out more!

Free Fish care training courses available on our website: aquariumindustries.com.au



THE SCHOOL
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Your Community Tank Shopping List

50L Tetra community tank

- 10 x Neon tetra
- 5 x Glolite tetra
- 5 x Rummy nose
- 5 x Corydoras sp
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Crypt Balansae
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Parva
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Broad Leaf Chain Sword

50L Dwarf cichlid community tank

- 2 x Apistogramma Cacatuoides pair
- 10 x Harlequin rasbora
- 5 x Corydoras sp
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Amazon Broad Leaf Sword
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Cryptocoryne Walkeri
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Cryptocoryne Lutea

50L Livebearer community tank

- 5 x Balloon mollies
- 10 x Guppies
- 5 x Corydoras sp.
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Baby Tears
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Green Pennywort
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Bacopa
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Pygmy Chain Sword

200L Gourami community tank

- 5 x Pearl Gourami
- 2 x Dwarf Gouramis
- 20 x Tiger Barbs
- 2 x Bristlenose Catfish
- 4 x Clown Loach
- 1 pack AI Naturals Range Red Undulata
- 2 packs AI Naturals Range Pygmy Chain Sword
- 2 packs AI Naturals Range Bacopa

200L Malawi community tank

- 3 x Blue Peacock Cichlids
- 3 x Benga Peacock Cichlids
- 3 x Eureka red Peacock Cichlids
- 5 x cobalt blues
- 5 x electric yellows
- 2-4 cuckoo catfish

200L River community tank

- 5 x Pearl cichlid
- 15 x Congo tetras
- 4 x reticulate loaches
- 1 x Green severum