

Dwarf Gouramis (usually identified by a descriptive name for the different colour varieties)

Colisa lalia



Left: Dwarf Male Gourami

Top Right: Male Dwarf Metallic Blue Gourami

Bottom Right: Male Dwarf Flame Gourami



Natural Range

Dwarf Gouramis are found in river plains in North Eastern India, Assam, and Bangladesh. They usually inhabit densely vegetated slow moving water.

Maximum Size and Longevity

Dwarf Gouramis will grow to approximately 7cm long. They will live for up to 4 years if kept in the correct water and habitat conditions.

Water Quality

- Temperature: 22°C - 28°C.
- pH: 6.5—7.5
- General Hardness: 50—150 ppm.

Feeding

Dwarf Gouramis are omnivorous and in the wild feed on small insects and larvae from the top of the water. They also readily feed on algae and plant matter. In the aquarium, they will feed on most types of feeds including floating pellets or flake. They also feed live or frozen foods like Bloodworms and Brine shrimp. Feeding live foods is essential in conditioning fish for breeding.

Compatibility

Dwarf Gouramis are a very peaceful fish and are more suited to a community tank that does not contain any predatory or aggressive fish. They can be kept with tetras, small barbs, native species such as Rainbowfish, as well as livebearers. Avoid keeping with large aggressive fish including some of the larger types of Gouramis.

Colour and Varieties

The wild form of Dwarf Gouramis have alternating blue and red/orange vertical stripes covering the body, with the stripes extending into the fins. The females are generally a dull silvery blue colour. Dwarf Gouramis are a relatively small, stumpy Gourami with long ventral fins that look like feelers.

Dwarf Gouramis have been selectively bred for many years to produce a variety of different colour forms such as; Blue Coral, Blue Rainbow, Rainbow Flame or Blood Red, Metallic Blue, and Neon.

Sexing

Males are in general a lot brighter in colour than females, with the colour intensifying during the breeding period. Females are smaller than males and not as brightly coloured with more rounded stomachs when holding eggs. Dwarf Gouramis spawning ritual includes building a bubble nest into which eggs are placed and guarded by the male. The nest floats on the water surface and acts as protection from poor water quality and predators.

General Information

Dwarf Gouramis are generally sold as males with female specimens not as readily available as males. They prefer heavily planted aquariums with at least a portion of the tank covered with floating plants. They are a peaceful fish that is ideally suited to a small to medium sized community tanks. Dwarf Gouramis have an interesting adaptation called the Labyrinth organ which they can use to 'breathe' air. This allows them to survive in areas of low oxygen and poor water quality.