

## Guppy

### *Poecilia reticulata*

This species belongs to the Livebearing Tooth Carp Family or Poeciliidae.



#### Natural Range

Guppies originate from South America and the West Indies, but nearly all guppies sold in Australia today are bred in Asia.

#### Maximum Size and Longevity

Sizes can range from 3 – 5cm.

#### Water Quality

- Temperature: 24°C - 26°C.
- pH: 7.0—7.5
- General Hardness: 250—300 ppm (if they start to get sick doubling this dose can help).

Guppies need clean, oxygen rich water, ensure tanks are not overcrowded are well aerated and filters are cleaned regularly. Make sure all biological filters are working properly, ensuring no ammonia or nitrite is present.

#### Feeding

An active fish, guppies use an enormous amount of energy and need to be fed at least 3 times a day, with a variety of foods including dry, fresh, frozen or live foods. Guppies are top feeders and will readily take most prepared foods. However, they should be given a diet with high vegetable content and a dry food such as TETRA's Spirulina Tropical Flakes should be used occasionally.

#### Compatibility

They are suited to a densely planted community tank with other peaceful fish. It is best to choose tank mates with similar water requirements - slightly alkaline hard water in their aquarium. Avoid stocking with larger or aggressive species which will nip at them because of their brightly coloured tails. Male guppies may continuously 'harass' female guppies if kept together, this can be avoided in commercial situations by stocking males and females in separate tanks. This will stop the continuous breeding.

#### Colour and Varieties

While there are many beautiful wild forms of livebearers, guppies have been selectively bred throughout the world to produce a huge variety of colours, body shape and fin arrangement.

#### Sexing

Livebearers have the common trait that they give birth to free swimming young (ovoviparous), instead of egg laying like most other fishes. To achieve this, male livebearers have a modified anal fin called a gonopodium that is used to facilitate internal fertilization of the female. Once fertilised, the eggs mature inside the oviduct of the mother. The eggs then hatch internally and give 'birth' to the resultant offspring soon after. The fry of guppies are about 7 to 10mm in length when born and are probably the most easily raised species as they will feed of finely ground dry foods and do not require smaller live foods like most other species when beginning to feed. Males and females are generally easily distinguished as males have a smaller body with brightly coloured tails, with females also having a dark 'gravid' spot in the anal region. Their ease of breeding means that it is the first species many hobbyists begin to breed.

#### General Information

Guppies are probably the most popular livebearer among both aquarium owners and advanced breeders. The once humble, dull-coloured guppy has become a sort after fish for hobbyists with selective breeding resulting in many varieties of spectacular colourations and finnage. These fish are generally robust and tolerant of a wide range of aquarium conditions – for this reason they are often recommended for beginners. However, because of intense selective breeding, fancy guppies can be harder to maintain than their wild ancestors.

For this reason it is important to try and match their tank conditions to their requirements of slightly hard and alkaline conditions, otherwise they can become weak and prone to bacterial infections. are prone to bacterial diseases in soft water, and new shipments should be treated with a preventative treatment if you are experiencing problems. Interestingly, guppies introduced into uncrowded home aquariums, where the water is well aged and there is plant life and algae to graze, can make the transition from the previously described hard water, with little or no ill effects. This is attributed to the higher levels of stress fish are exposed to under commercial conditions, such as fish constantly coming in and out of tanks, more handling, and higher densities.