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local OATA  
retail member  
for further information*



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**IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

**ALWAYS PURCHASE** test kits and regularly check the water for ammonia, nitrite, nitrate and pH. This will allow you to ensure that the water in your aquarium is not causing welfare problems for your fish.

**ESTABLISH A ROUTINE** for testing the water in your aquarium. Record your results to enable you to highlight fluctuations quickly. Also check the temperature of the water.

**MAINTAIN** the water in the aquarium within the accepted parameters highlighted in this leaflet. You may need to undertake regular water changes to achieve this.

**ALWAYS** wash your hands, making sure to rinse off all soap residues, before putting them into your aquarium. Wash them again afterwards and certainly before eating, drinking or smoking.

**NEVER** siphon by mouth. A fish tank can harbour bacteria which can be harmful if swallowed. Purchase a specially designed aquarium gravel cleaner which can be started without the need to place the siphon in your mouth.

**NEVER RELEASE YOUR AQUARIUM ANIMALS OR PLANTS INTO THE WILD.**

Never release an animal or plant bought for a home aquarium into the wild. It is illegal and for most fish species this will lead to an untimely and possibly lingering death as they are not native to this country. Any animals or plants that do survive might be harmful to the environment.

## Checklist...

### Equipment:

- Aquarium
  - Gravel cleaner
  - Water testing kit
  - Marine salt
  - Marine substrate and live rock
  - Reverse osmosis or deionised water or tap water conditioner
  - Heater, thermometer and hydrometer
  - Filter and protein skimmer
- Before purchase ensure that:**
- The aquarium is well established.
  - Water parameters are as advised.
  - The species you choose is compatible with your set-up.



**ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION LTD**

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## How to care for...



## Anemones

## Introduction...

Anemones can add vibrant colour and diversity to a marine tank, however they need proper care and good water quality to ensure they remain healthy.

Anemones are Cnidarians and are closely related to corals, jellyfish and hydroids. They can be found throughout the world from tropical reefs to temperate tide and rock pools.

## Water requirements...

Anemones are very sensitive to water quality, therefore it is recommended that the parameters are within the following, although these animals may acclimatise to different water over time:

Temperature: 23-26°C

pH: 8.1-8.4

Ammonia: 0mg/l (0.01mg/l may be tolerated for short periods)

Nitrite: 0mg/l (0.125mg/l may be tolerated for short periods)

S.G.: 1.020-1.025 at 22-26°C

## Biology...

Sea anemones available for aquariums are varied and therefore so is the maximum size. Some can grow up to 3ft across in the wild, advice should be sought from your retailer regarding the species in which you are interested.

As Cnidarians, these organisms contain stinging cells in the tentacles known as nematocysts. These vary in strength. The majority are not dangerous to humans, although some, such as the carpet anemones, can produce mild stings similar to that of a nettle.

Some anemone species are separate sexes and others are hermaphrodites. However both are capable of sexual and asexual reproduction through the process of budding.

Anemones are found stuck to rocks and substrate via the muscular foot known as a disc. The mouth is situated centrally on the surface of the anemone surrounded by the tentacles.

Anemones may thrive for many years in an aquarium in pristine water quality and without ailments. However be wary that anemones which are seemingly healthy have been known to stop eating and die for no clear reasons.

## Aquarium requirements...

Some anemones can get quite large and their size changes throughout the day. Consider a larger aquarium for keeping anemones, although some smaller species have been kept in nano aquaria.

Good water circulation provided by your filter and additional powerheads will be beneficial. Heater, thermometer and hydrometer are essential. Like corals, most anemones have photosynthetic zooxanthellae and therefore require lighting.

Anemones are motile creatures that can move around their environment. A base of live rock will aid filtration and provide a variety of habitats for the anemone to explore and be best suited to.

Be careful to cover any internal pump inlets; anemones can often be attracted to fast flowing water and their delicate tissues can become easily damaged if drawn into a pump inlet.

## Maintenance...

At least every two weeks, a partial water change of 25-30% is strongly recommended (a siphon device is also useful to remove waste from the gravel). This help to reduce the build-up of potentially harmful nitrates and other pollutants. Replacement water should be dechlorinated using strong aeration or a tap water conditioner (if not using reverse osmosis water). Ideally, replacement water should be heated and enough salt should be added to achieve the correct salinity.

Filters should be checked for clogging and blockages. If the filter needs cleaning, then do not wash it using tap water; any chlorine present may kill the beneficial bacteria that has established within the media. Instead, it can be rinsed in tank water which is removed during a partial water change. This should reduce the number of bacteria lost.

Good husbandry is essential as anemones can be sensitive to even the smallest amounts of ammonia and nitrite. Test the water weekly to monitor ammonia, nitrite and nitrate, especially after initial set-up and after adding new fish. Don't forget to check the salinity as this may increase due to evaporation of water.

Anemones are highly sensitive to copper which can be found in some fish medications. If a medication is required, consult your retailer to obtain a copper-free medication.

## Feeding...

Anemones feed using two mechanisms. The first is through its symbiotic zooxanthellae, so ensure that the aquarium has sufficient lighting. A anemone which is utilising its zooxanthellae will be colourful and expand on a regular basis. The second is through the carnivorous feeding upon zooplankton and in some cases fish. This can be provided by the manual addition of frozen shrimp, mussels and lancefish and should be carried out once every couple of weeks. Remove any uneaten food from the aquarium to reduce the build up of waste.

It is important to monitor your individual anemone regularly to establish the best feeding regime as each individual may be different from the next.

## Common problems...

A water quality problem will affect anemone behaviour and can be shown by loss of colour, shrivelling, rotting of the body and disc. Immediately test the water if any of these symptoms are shown. Poor water quality is the main cause of disease outbreak in aquariums.

If in doubt ask your retailer for advice.

## Compatibility...

Anemones are most famous for the relationship they have with clownfish, which use them as a safe haven and breeding sites.

Anemones are safe with most other aquarium animals, although they can sting corals, other fish and invertebrates. Avoid slow moving tank mates such as seahorses and pipefish.

## Breeding...

Sexual reproduction occurs through the production of eggs and sperm which creates a free swimming planular larvae. This larvae will then settle onto the substrate and form a small polyp which will feed and grow into an adult. Asexual reproduction occurs through the budding of an adult, a small bulge will be produced from the side of the individual forming a replica of the adult.