



Fish leaflet



Platy

The platy is a popular sight in many a community aquarium. It is also a fairly easy to keep fish that goes well with other fish species and brings color in the aquarium. There are platys with various colors and body markings. They reproduce easily.

Ruinemans Aquarium B.V.
WHOLESALE OF ORNAMENTAL FISH

www.wuinemans.com
info@wuinemans.com

Branches
Miami Florida USA
Manaus Amazonas Brasil

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General

The platy, also called platy, is a well-known aquarium fish. Originally they come from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. By nature they have all kinds of color shades, but the breeding forms have rather even shades of orange and red with or without body markings. The females grow up to six inches long; males remain smaller. Platys belong to the viviparous toothed carp. This means that females do not lay eggs but incubate them internally. Platys live up to three to four years.

Variants

Platys come in different breeding varieties. These can be yellow, orange, black, red, blue and spotted. There are all kinds of markings, such as the Mickey Mouse platy that has a marking at its tail with markings resembling the head of Mickey Mouse. There are also platys with extra high dorsal fins. The platy is easy to confuse with the closely related *Xiphophorus variatus*. However, this one is somewhat larger. Crossbreeds also occur.

Nature

By nature, platys occur in calm freshwater with ample vegetation. They eat worms, crustaceans, insects and plants such as algae. Platys are peaceful and live in groups.

Housing

There is a lot involved in setting up, decorating and maintaining an aquarium. In the Practical Information on "The Tropical Freshwater Aquarium" you will find out how to go about it and explains the terms used. You can choose a tank with only platys, but they are also suitable to keep in community aquariums with other species, such as guinea pigs. with other species, for example guppies or neon tetras. Platys make use of all water layers but most of the middle layer. To keep platys, you need an aquarium at least 50 to 60 centimeters long. Take always more females than males because the males keep chasing the females to mate. One male for every two to four females works best. Although platys can withstand temperatures between 20 and 26 degrees Celsius, a water temperature around 24 degrees is best for them. The pH (acidity) of the water should be between seven and eight; hardness should be between 10 and 25 DH. A air pump, a water filter and lighting are also among the basic aquarium equipment. Aquatic plants serve as shelter for the young fish and help maintain water quality. maintain.

Care and Handling

Daily, take a look at the fish to make sure they are healthy. Also check the water temperature and remove any food debris. Remove loose plant debris every week. Test the water regularly with test kits that you can buy in pet stores. Important are important are the acidity (pH), hardness and the amount of ammonium, nitrite and nitrate. At a well-functioning filter, ammonium and nitrite are not measurable. Nitrate can be easily removed from the water by water changes. Change the water regularly, depending on the measured water quality. A guideline for platys is to change about a third of the water every two weeks to replace about one-third of the water. Clean the mechanical part of the filter regularly by rinsing in the old aquarium water. If necessary, clean the panes with a magnetic sweeper, a scraper or filter wads. Use attributes intended for the aquarium, such as a bucket and scoop net, only for the aquarium and not for other household activities. Always wash your hands after with the aquarium. If using a siphon hose, make sure you do not water in. Some fish diseases are also contagious to humans.

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Feeding

You can use all kinds of food for the platys, such as dry food, frozen food such as Artemia (brine shrimp, suitable for young platys) and live food such as water fleas, Tubifex or mosquito larvae. Do allow frozen food to thaw first. For newborn platys, crumble the dry food. Platys also like to eat algae and other green foods. Feed as much as the fish will eat in one to two minutes.

Reproduction

In platys, it is easy to tell the difference between males and females. Not only is the male often smaller than the female, the anal fin also looks different. In the male platy is this transformed into a mating organ, the gonopodium: because the platy is viviparous, the fertilization of the female occurs internally. Females can store sperm and divide it among multiple fertilizations. Pregnant females can be identified by a dark spot on their abdomen. Pregnancy lasts four to six weeks. The female gives birth to an average of 20 to 40 young at a time. Larger females often give birth to more young than smaller females. The young platys take care of themselves. They do need a hiding place in, for example, floating water plants, otherwise they will be eaten. After about three months, platys can reproduce themselves, although there are types where this takes longer, for females sometimes even more than a year.

Disease and Disorders

To keep your fish healthy, it is very important to ensure good water quality and proper nutrition. Stress can be prevented by leaving the fish alone as much as possible and a fixed daily pattern. Do not put species together that harass each other. Signs of health problems include dull or affected skin, pinched fins, an abnormal body shape and an abnormal way of swimming (e.g., rocking or crooked). Platys, like many other aquarium fish, can suffer from parasites. Examples of parasitic skin diseases are white spot and velvet disease. On the gills, unicellular organisms and gill flukes may occur. The latter attach themselves in the gills with hooks, damaging the tissue is damaged and infections occur. Parasites also occur in the intestines, including various worms and flagellates. Bacteria can cause various fish diseases. Columnaris disease primarily results in damage to the skin and gills and can quickly spread to become a serious disease. It is difficult to treat. Fish TB is caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium. This affects the organs of the fish. In humans, this bacterium can cause swimmer's granuloma, a disease with skin lesions which requires a long course of antibiotics. Fish TB can also be transmitted through frozen food. Infections by bacteria are often secondary: they are then a result of reduced resistance (e.g. due to stress), damaged skin or impairment of the mucus layer of the skin due to poor water quality. An example of this is fin rot. It is therefore important not only to treat the disease, but above all to find and correct the primary cause. Often fish can recover through prompt treatment. In the pet or aquarium store for general advice on diseases and possible treatments. You will also find some remedies to treat diseases. Make sure that continue treatment long enough to kill all pathogens.

Required Experience

No specific experience is needed to responsibly keep these fish. They are popular fish with first-timers. Make sure be sure to inform yourself well in advance about setting up an aquarium.

Purchase and Costs

Platys can be purchased at aquarium specialty stores. When buying fish, make sure they come from clean tanks with healthy animals. Choose the most active fish. Make sure that the fish have nice clean skin and are not skinny. Gradually allow the animals to get used to the new water conditions, even better to put new fish in a quarantine tank. place. A platy is an inexpensive fish; you will spend about a few euros each. The start-up costs of an aquarium depend on the size of the aquarium and the desired technique. Recurring costs are those for food, test kits, filter material and energy for heating and lighting. You may also incur costs if diseases develop in the aquarium. develop.