

Photo by Dave Antcliff
Koi Angelfish



GRAND VALLEY AQUARIUM CLUB TANK NOTES

MARCH - JUNE 2017

ISSUE 76

GVAC ANNUAL SPRING AUCTION MARCH 18, 2017

Time: Auction Begins at 11 AM
(Seller Registration Begins at 9:30 AM)
Auction goes until all items are sold!

Location: Home School Building Gym
5625 Burlingame Ave SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

*You do not have to be a member to buy or sell, please visit
www.gvaquariumclub.org/auctions for auction rules.*

Have questions or would like to volunteer?
Contact Andrew Kalafut (kalafuta@gvsu.edu)

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Cyndi Westra, ccyndiw@yahoo.com

Raffle Chair:

Eric Maxson, ericmaxon@hotmail.com

2017 CLUB BUDGET

Income

Auctions	\$5,370
Raffles	\$900
Swap Meet	\$840
Memberships	\$1,100
Monthly Auctions	\$1,200
Total Income	\$9,410

Expenses

Home School Building	\$3,600
Picnic Venue Rental	\$120
Summer Picnic	\$700
Christmas Party	\$900
Rare Fish	\$400
Speaker Fees	\$2,200
Insurance	\$436
State of Michigan	\$20
Website	\$120
Awards	\$600
P.O. Box	\$130
Newsletter	\$130
Misc.	\$54
Total Expenses	\$9,410

GVAC FELLOWS

The following is a list of Fellows of the Grand Valley Aquarium Club. These are members who have contributed to making GVAC a successful club. They have held many positions within the club and donated countless hours during those tasks that would not be completed without their hard work and dedication. New Fellows are nominated by current fellows and voted on by the general membership.

Tim Boelema
Finn Nielsen
Ken Zeedyk
Roger Miller

Ben VanDinther
Jeff Vander Berg
Patrick Miller
Mike Monje

Don't forget to thank them when you see them at meetings or other events.

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Website: www.gvaquariumclub.org

Email: gvaquariumclub@gmail.com

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Shealyn Sarns, GVAC Editor
P.O. Box 325
Grandville, MI 49418-0325



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

If you are anything like me, the weather this last month has you itching for spring. I know I am itching to get back outside and get my ponds up and running, but for now there is still much to do in the fish

room! The board and I have been hard at work preparing for the spring auction and some new events this spring which we will be announcing shortly. This is your club, so if you have anything new that you would like to see please let myself or one of the other board members know.

I have been getting quite a few questions lately about HAP and BAP, and thought I would take a moment to clarify some rules for the two programs. Both HAP and BAP are a great way to be recognized for accomplishments in the hobby, and the competition adds a fun element. I have enjoyed participation in both, and highly members to give it a try.

BAP

- Any naturally occurring species may be turned in at a meeting or auction for a point.
- Fry must be 60 days old at time of auction.
- Hybrids are not accepted in the BAP program.
- Points are awarded for species, not for color variants. (ie. angels can only be turned in once regardless of color)
- A fish may only be turned in once for points by any one participant. Both species and subspecies of a fish in a genus that are recognized as naturally occurring are accepted and given full points. (fish such as *Aulonocara stuartgranti* which has multiple naturally occurring variants can be turned in for each subspecies).
- For every 10 points a tag will be awarded for the members BAP plaque.
- At certain levels special awards such as Expert Breeder and Master Breeder will be awarded.
- The person who turns in the most species in a calendar year will win Breeder of the Year.
- The person who is new to the program who turns in the most points will win Rookie of the Year.
- The DIVERSIFICATION AWARD is an award given to participants who BAP at least one species from each of the following categories: Cichlid, Catfish, Goby, Livebearer, Killifish, Characin, Anabantid and Rainbowfish.
- An Article, photo or video must be turned in for every ten spawns to qualify for awards.
- Additional questions can be directed to the BAP chairs, Kevin Hightower and Tom Siegfried.

HAP

- All plant species can be propagated and turned in for 1 point per species
- Points are awarded for Vegetative, Sexual, and Flowering reproduction.
- Definitions of Vegetative propagation:
Floating plants – doubling of the original amount.

Bunch plants – doubling of the original amount determined by the root count of the growing stems.

Runner or Division – One healthy plant capable of living independently of the parent plant while the parent is still living.

• Flowering: Must be verified while in full bloom and the flower is attached to the plant in the aquarium or pond. Does not require the plant to be turned in. A picture can be emailed or posted on facebook with a HAP form submission to get this point.

• Sexual: at least one plant reproduced via seed from participant's own plant.

• For Every 10 vegetative propagations and every 5 flowering and sexual propagations a tag will be awarded.

• For every tag earned, an article, photo or video must be submitted to the newsletter.

• Special awards will be awarded at certain points, ie 30 vegetative propagations and 5 flowering will earn someone the Horticulturist plaque.

• The person with the most overall propagations will receive the Horticulturist of the year award

• The person who is new to the program with the most propagations will win Rookie of the Year.

Further questions should be directed to Steve Hosteter.

• If you have any questions on either of these programs, please don't hesitate to ask. I hope you will consider trying these great programs.

Swimming forward,

Justin Sarns
GVAC President

FROM THE EDITOR

To recap above and focus on newsletter submissions, for every tag you earn, one article, photo or video needs to be submitted to the newsletter. For BAP, that's every 10 spawns. For HAP, that's every 10 vegetative or every 5 flowering or sexual propagation.

Articles, photos and videos are all accepted as submissions for Tank Notes. For articles, I prefer articles that are at least one half page long and typed. It helps me a ton if you re-read and edit your article, but I always read articles and try to catch typos if I can. For photos, please make sure that photos are clear/in focus and are free from distractions (i.e. light glares on glass). Also, sending files that are largest your camera takes is best to make sure files are large enough. For videos, upload your video to sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, etc. and send me the link. Videos should also be clear and free from distractions.

Submit articles, photos and videos by either emailing the club's email address (gvaquariumclub@gmail.com) or my personal email (4tendesign@gmail.com). If you have questions on anything newsletter related, please let me know!

Shealyn Sarns, GVAC Tank Notes Editor

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

MARCH:

4: Greater Detroit Aquarium Society Auction
Royal Oak Community Center, 11 AM
(Seller Registration begins at 9:30 AM)
www.greaterdetroitaquariumsociety.org

5: **GVAC Board Meeting**
Justin Sarns' House, 2 PM

Greater Chicago Cichlid Association
Swap Meet, Hoffman Estates, IL
www.gcca.net

11: SWMAS Spring Auction
Plainwell, Michigan
www.swmas.org

GVAC Meeting
7 PM - Homeschool Building
Speaker: Rick Preuss

18: **GVAC Annual Spring Auction**
details on page 1

19: Circle City Aquarium Club Spring Auction
Indianapolis, IN, 10:30 AM
(Seller Registration begins at 8:30 AM)
www.ccacaclub.org

APRIL:

1: Michiana Aquarium Society Auction
Resurrection Lutheran Academy
South Bend, IN 46628
11 AM (Seller Registration begins at 9 AM)
<http://www.michianaaquariumsociety.org>

8: **GVAC Meeting**
7 PM - Homeschool Building
Speaker: Barbie Fiorentino,
Spawning Plecos

28-30: Michigan Killifish Association
Show & Auction
www.mka.aka.org

MAY:

4-7: ALA 2017 Convention
St. Louis, MO
www.ala2017.com

21: Greater Chicago Cichlid Association
Swap Meet, Hoffman Estates, IL
www.gcca.net

13: **GVAC Board Meeting**
Homeschool Building, 5 PM

GVAC Meeting
7 PM - Homeschool Building
Speaker: Pat Hartman - An old rookie
goes to Mexico

JUNE:

3-4: Michigan Guppy Breeders Show & Auction
www.michianguppybreeders.com

10: **GVAC Meeting**
7 PM - Homeschool Building
Speaker: Lawrence Kent - A Cichlid guy
discovers Anabantoids

IT'S THE SIMPLE THINGS SOMETIMES....

By Kevin Hightower

When keeping fish and especially when you try to breed fish, frustration inevitably sets in. I had a bout of this pertaining to a few groups of fish that I have had for 6 months to over two years that I could not get to spawn! Not one egg! Not even a trace of them even interested in trying! All of the fish had the appropriate conditions, parameters, set-ups, and no health concerns. What do I do?

After some debating on what to do — sell, give away, flush, wait longer — I decided that I needed to do more research. This on top of the hours that I had done before I bought the fish and leading up to this point. What can it hurt, more information and knowledge makes you stronger, maybe I missed something? The next few nights I did a bunch of searching on Google, watched countless hours of YouTube videos, and I learned some new things but nothing obvious. No big ah-ha moment.

After growing more frustrated, the next day during lunch I decided to watch some more videos. I watched a few on the species that I had but then I clicked on a few others, maybe I would have to try something new. While watching one of the other videos that I don't even have the fish for, something the presenter said hit me. He said, sometimes you can have the perfect set up and it does not work, if it is not working then how can you get mad at the fish that it is not working, if you don't change it? For some reason those words hit home with me. I thought I had the correct set-ups but it obviously did not work for these fish, changes needed to happen.

That night I went home and moved some of the fish around and made a few small changes. Within a week I had spawns from two of them! I have no idea why the simple changes helped to trigger the spawns but in the end it doesn't matter, I accomplished my goal. The lesson I learned here was all about change. Don't be mad at the fish for not doing what you want them to do, change it if you don't like the results!



'LAMPROLOGUS' MULTIFASCIATUS

By Chris Carpenter (Photo by the Author)

One of the first cichlids I ever kept and successfully bred was 'Lamprologus' multifasciatus. To this day they are one of my favorite fish and the catalyst for an obsession with Tanganyika cichlids and more specifically the "shell dwellers". If you're not familiar with the term "shell dweller" it refers to a fish that uses empty snail shells as shelter and breeding site. In Lake Tanganyika the preferred shell is of the snail *Neothauma tanganyicense* which are extremely rare in the hobby but are easily replicated with turbo snail or my favorite escargot shells. I recommend keeping 3 to 4 shells per fish. At first glance this fish might seem a bit drab but once you get close, and you'll need to because they are considered the smallest cichlid in the world, you notice the very cool pattern of light bands on a dark body and their beautiful blue eyes. Males of this species reach a maximum size of 2" with females averaging just over 1". The name "multifasciatus" translates to multi = many, fasciatus = banded.

If you do a quick search online for these fish you'll find that they come up under the name *Lamprologus*, *Neolamprologus* and even *exLamprologus*. For now, the correct genus is 'Lamprologus' with the single quotes meaning a fish that is waiting to be reclassified, you'll find this with many of the fish from Lake Tanganyika since the genus *Lamprologus* has been awaiting reclassification for 16 years.

'Lamprologus' multifasciatus is a harem breeder meaning one male will take multiple females. They form large colonies with multiple generations of fry coexisting in the same aquarium. I once had a 125-gallon aquarium with hundreds of multi's of all sizes, at feeding time it was an awesome sight seeing all the fish rise from their shell beds to eat. If you're a cichlid lover or new to cichlids and don't have a large aquarium free, no need to worry because these fish are so small they don't demand a large tank. I prefer to keep them in a 20 long or larger but I have kept and bred many shell dwellers in 10 gallon aquariums. If keeping them in a 10 gallon I recommend having a single pair, they are cichlids after all and cichlids are territorial. Each multi will claim a shell and defend it vigorously, even from you, often attacking your hand if you get too close. Sand is a must if you want *L. multifasciatus* to be comfortable and exhibit one of their greatest character traits. These fish will spend all day digging and scooping sand with their mouths and spitting it out of their territory. In fact, they will totally rework the aquascape to their liking, usually resulting in their shells being on bare glass and mounds of sand surrounding.

Once they have settled in they should breed readily if basic requirements are met. Routine water changes, temperature of approximately 75-80 and a varied diet. When I want to trigger a spawn three to four days straight of live black worms or frozen brine shrimp usually does the trick. The female will lay her eggs inside her shell and if the shell is large enough the male will enter and fertilize, if the shell is smaller the male will release his milt while the female exits the shell. Brood sizes are not typically not very large. 10-15 fry is what I expect to find. As long as there are no predators in the aquarium I find there is no need to pull the fry since multifasciatus are extremely good parents. Once you see the fry they are large enough to accept live or frozen baby brine, mysis, micro worms or crushed flake.

If you enjoy watching your fish, then 'Lamprologus' multifasciatus is a must have fish! Comical, beautiful and endlessly entertaining, I promise you'll be hooked.

ROGER MILLER'S FISHROOM LIQUIDATION SALE

Saturday, March 4, 2017
10:30 AM - 5 PM

582 Fremont St.
Newaygo MI 49337

Questions? Please contact Mike Monje



Photo by Joe Spaniolo, Altum Angels

THE BREAD AND BUTTER FISH

By Mike Monje

Most hardcore hobbyists tend to ignore the common species of fish. The species that the trade often refer to as The Bread and Butter Fish. These tend to be the fish that the beginning fish-keeper acquire, and are ignored by seasoned hobbyists. What I don't understand is why? These so called easy to keep fish, have a place in every fish-keepers collection.

Cherry Barbs, *Puntius titteya*, these fish are beautiful, the males being bright red the females a nice reddish orange. Cherry Barbs are an excellent dither fish for smaller South American cichlids, or the more robust African cichlids, quick enough to escape any real harm from the cichlids. Excuse me for this part, cheap enough to be expendable targets instead of your expensive cichlids taking out one another. After saying that I have rarely lost a cherry barb to a cichlid, they are simply small and fast enough to evade harm most of the time. Highly adaptable to water conditions, beautiful in their own right, generally peaceful enough for a community tank, quick enough for a dither. Cherry Barbs deserve a place in most fishrooms.

Guppies, *Poecilia reticulata*, while considered a Bread and Butter fish, these fish are also a specialty among many dedicated hobbyists. Still I'll include them because they are a staple in the hobby. One of the most stunning aquarium setups I've ever seen was a 55 gallon, driftwood branches standing along the length of the tank, just a few Amazon Swords, and about Fifty Yellow / Half Black male guppies swimming among the driftwood branches. Keeping and breeding some guppies can provide a valuable live food, with your culls, or breed them for a live food source. Male guppies make for beautiful fish in the properly researched community tank.

Zebra Danios, *Danio rerio*, a tired and true favorite of the hobby, almost always in stock in any Fish Store. I put them right there with Cherry Barbs, (Highly adaptable to water conditions, beautiful in their own right, generally peaceful enough for a community tank, quick enough for a dither). If as a hobbyist you've never bred an egg scattering species, arguably the best species to start with.

Platies, Swordtails, and Mollies...the variety of colors, finnage, even body shapes is staggering. Generally not quick or hardy enough to be a dither fish, they work and show well in carefully researched community tank, adding color and variety to the display. Plus you can put them to work, Mollies are one of the best hair algae eaters around, Swordtails and Platies will also pick at algae growth. Keeping mixed sexes in any tank will yield fry, keep males only for a more controlled display. Again you can chose to rear the fry or supplement your live food source availability.

As a hobbyist who's been keeping fish longer than I'd like to admit, I can honestly say the so called Bread and Butter Fish, simply don't get old or uninteresting to me. If you've outgrown these fish as you progressed in the hobby. I encourage you to take a fresh look at these fish, look around your tanks, I bet one of these species would be a great addition to one of your tanks. These are the fish most of us started with. Who knows it may just renew your hobby a bit by traveling back down this path.

2017 BAP JANUARY - FEBRUARY

John Yost - 7

Pelvicachromis pulcher
Pseudotropheus saulosi
Sciaenochromis fryeri
Aulonocara Stuartgranti
Planorbis rubrum
Pundamilia nyererei
Haplochromis sp. "Hippo Point Salmon"

Justin Sarns - 5

Astotilapia burtoni
Aulonocara baenschii
Copadichromis borleyi
Aulonocara sp. *Usisya* Type Tanzania
Haplochromis sp. K.K. Beach

Chris Carpenter - 2

Yssichromis sp. "blue tipped"
Pseudotropheus interruptus

Coty Major - 2

Peicilia wingei (Endlers)
Asolene spixi snails

Joe Spaniolo - 2

Asolene spixi
Barbus fasciolatus

Joe Gardner - 1

Goodea gracilis (Dusky split tail goodeid)

Ken Zeedyk - 1

Sewellia sp SEW03

2017 BAP BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Participants: 7

Total Points Earned: 20

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT GVAC:

ADG/Aqua Design Amano USA
Amazonas Magazine
Aquarium Services
Aquatic Gardeners Association -
Karen Randall
Blue Fish Aquarium
Boyd Enterprises
CichlidBreeding.com
Cichlid Press
Dave's Rare Fish
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HBH Pet Products
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Marineland
OddballFish.com
Ocean Star International
OmegaSea
Penn Plax
Pet Supplies Plus

Preuss Pets
Python Products
Repashy Superfoods
San Francisco Bay Brand
Seachem Laboratories, Inc.
SpectraPure
Ted's Fishroom
Tetra
TFH - Tropical Fish Hobbyist
Watercolors Aquarium Gallery
Zoo Med Laboratories, Inc.



LOW-MEDIUM LIGHT TANKS

By Eric Maxson (Photos by the Author)

I have really have not done much with live plants but in early 2016 Roger Miller really got me thinking about it. So with all his input and the research I did. I started my first real planted tank now I have a few of them going from low light to high light but have not tried any CO2 yet. This is what I think works for your low-medium lighted tanks.

For lighting you need a least 2 watts per gallon, like for a 10 gallon you would need 20 watts. If you don't go with the standard light bulb try getting a planted light bulb with at least 500k or higher color rating. 2 bulbs are better then one and should not be on for more the 10 hours a day.

Substrate and fertilizers: Gravel or sand will work if you have fish, this will give you a natural fertilizer. You can add peat moss, dirt, ect under the sand or gravel too. Liquid fertilizer can also be used. I myself am using easy green from Aquarium Co-op, seems to work good for me. You can also do a teaspoon of Epsom salts once a month to help keep green too.

Filtration: Power bio-wheel, sponge, ect., they all work well.

When getting your new plant. cut any damaged leaves or roots you see with something sharp. When planting swords grass types and crypt, don't plant deep. Burry then pull up until you see top of roots. If you plant the crown of the plant it may rot.

With bunch type plants like ludwigia rotala, wisterra, ect. plant them about 3/4 to 1 inch deep.

Rhizome plants: plant only the roots never the rhizome. If needed, weigh down or tie to driftwood until the roots establish themselves.

Algae: If this develops it is 1 or 2 things; too much light or too much fertilizer. Cut back and adjust it until you get it right.

Otocinclus cats, Siamese algae eaters flying foxes cherry shrimp and rosy barbs are some good cleaners too.

I am not an expert but this is what I think works.



Photo by Dan Kraker, *Tropheus tropheops* Makokola OB

2017 HAP JANUARY - FEBRUARY

Eric Maxson – 19

Rotala sp. "mini Butterfly" (V)
Limnobium laevigatum (V)
Lemna minor (V)
Echinodorus barthii var 'Red Melon' (V)
Abubias barteri nana 'petite' (V)
Abubias barteri nana (V)
Pogostemon sp. 'Kimberley' (V)
Nymphoides sp. 'Taiwan' (V)
Limnophila sp 'Mini Vietnam' (V)
Vallisneria spiralis (V)
Ceratophyllum demersum (V)
Microsurum pteropus 'Windelov' (V)
Limnophila belem (V)
Sagittaria subulata (V)
Cryptocoryne wendtii sp. 'Bronze' (V)
Salvinia minunas (V)
Limnophila sp. 'Green' (V)
Cryptocoryne wendtii sp. 'Red' (V)
Hygrophila sp. 'Tiger' (V)

Peter Goeetner – 2

Bulbitis heteroclita (V)
Hydrocolyte tripartita sp. 'Japan' (V)

Steve Hosteter – 1

Micranthemum umbrosum (V)

Justin Sarns – 1

Phyllanthus fluitans (V)

2017 HAP BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Participants: 4

Total Points Earned: 23



CHANGES

By Chris Carpenter (Photo by the Author)

11 years in and I still find myself talking about how I am a former alcoholic and drug addict. Alcohol, and drugs consumed a great deal of my life, including my thoughts. When I made the decision to quit I knew that I would need a hobby that could consume this time, something I could become passionate about to fill the hole I was creating. Little did I know that the 3 aquariums I was keeping would turn into many more, and that keeping and breeding fish would fill that void.

11 years of sobriety, and my life has changed in so many ways that I never imagined. As a drug addict I was intentionally disconnected. Now I find myself wanting to connect with people. Talking fish gives me the perfect window of opportunity. There are some great people in the aquarium hobby! I love picking the brains of our speakers and longtime hobbyists. I also love to meet, encourage, and offer any advice I can to new members.

Another big change for me is that approximately 3 years ago I picked up a part time job as an aquarium service representative for a company called Serenity Aquarium Services, a sister company to Custom Aquariums. Most days this gives me the opportunity to talk fish with all types of people. Most find the fish fascinating, especially when I explain mouthbrooding, or tell them about how the Victorian cichlids in the tank are an endangered species.

This hobby has offered me many challenges, and given me many rewards. They describe an addict as always "chasing that first high," I get that first high every time I breed a new species, probably why I often lose interest in a fish after they've spawned. I've received a few awards for my accomplishments in the aquarium hobby, and can tell you I never received any plaques

or certificates for "Alcoholic of the Year," thankfully.

Early on in my sobriety, I took an intensive outpatient class. One of the missions in the class was to identify the reasons for our alcohol and drug use. This was easy for me, one of the main reasons I used drugs and alcohol was to loosen up, and become more outgoing. Growing up I lacked confidence and at times it made me painfully shy, I absolutely hated this about myself! Drinking gave me liquid courage, and helped me overcome my bashfulness, but it was a double-edged sword. When I was drunk I was extremely confident, but I could also be a real jerk. When I sobered up I was ashamed of myself, giving me less confidence.

In high school I failed speech communications class 3 times because I refused to give public presentations. Public speaking has always been my greatest fear, and one I figured I would never overcome, I was wrong. GVAC and Justin Sarns gave me the challenge and opportunity to give a presentation to our club. I accepted, but I can't tell you how nervous I was for the months leading up to it. I gave my presentation to GVAC and the first few slides I was extremely nervous, it showed. I pushed through and I did beat those nerves, I was very happy with how it turned out. Since then I've given the presentation 7 more times with 3 more lined up, including the 2017 ACA Convention in Detroit. Thank you GVAC and Justin for pushing me to overcome this fear! I now know why 11 years later I still talk about being a former alcoholic and drug addict because damn it, I'm proud of what I've accomplished!

Michigan Cichlid Association Presents Cruisin' for Cichlids



ACA 2017

July 13th - July 16th
Sheraton Hotel

21111 Haggerty Rd, Novi, MI 48375
(248) 349-4000
Novi, MI



Facebook:
ACA Convention

First Class Tours
Belle Isle Aquarium and
Scripts Conservatory
Henry Ford Museum

Babes Auction
ACA Members-Only Raffle
Dry Goods Auction
Sunday Livestock Auction

First Class Speakers:

Juan Miguel Artigas Azas
Pam Chin
Jeff Michels
Chris Carpenter

Ted Judy
Larry Johnson
Dale Ernst
Dominic Cergnul

For more information: ACAConvention2017.com



SILVER DOLLAR, METYNNIS ARGENTEUS

By Chase Klinesteker (Photo by the author, silver dollar fry)

THE CHALLENGE

A couple of years ago I purchased 3 small silver dollar fish, *Metynnis argenteus*, thinking I might try to breed them before they got too large. When they quickly approached 4 1/2 inches and I realized that I only had 20 gallon tanks available to breed them in (my two 70 gallon tanks were full of plants!), I considered getting rid of them. When I mentioned that to a friend in the aquarium club he said "you will never be able to breed Silver Dollars in a 20 gallon tank." Unwittingly, he had proposed a challenge I could not refuse!

DESCRIPTION

Metynnis argenteus is a peaceful, active, and schooling fish that is often seen in pet shops around 1 1/2 to 2 inches long. They are quite attractive with their perfectly round shaped body, silvery reflection, and some red color in their fins. Only later do some people realize that they can grow to over 6 inches and mow down all live plants in a tank! They do best in large tanks of 50 gallons and more, as they are fast swimmers and need lots of swimming room. They can be spooky and a challenge to catch in a net. They prefer clean, aerated soft water around 75-82 degrees and subdued lighting for breeding, but regular tap water is fine to keep them in.

Silver dollars feed off the surface and in the water column, and will eat most all foods, including flake, live, and frozen. Some vegetable matter is required, which includes spirulina flake, vegetables, or simply excess plant growth from other tanks. They can live to be 10 or more years old.

AMAZON BLACKWATER BIOTOPE

By Steve Christian

Like most avid aquarists, we tend to daydream about that next aquarium project. A great option that has been around for years but is becoming increasingly popular is the South American blackwater biotope. Several of us are always looking for a way to replicate our fishes' natural environments to enhance breeding or just to add that natural touch.

Most of us in Michigan have medium to hard water. Setting up an Amazon biotope, which is very soft and highly acidic, may sound a little difficult to accomplish. It is easier than you would think. Most of us have available resources to accomplish this in our own backyards. The internet also has several materials available. Tannin Aquatics is one of

BREEDING

Normally, Silver Dollars are bred in large tanks or pools, but I was determined to try and get BAP points on this fish. Females need to be separated and fed fairly heavily to fill up with eggs, so I used Spirulina flake, frozen beef heart, and excess live plants. Adult Silver Dollars are fairly easy to sex by examining their anal fins, the males' are convex at the bottom, and the females' are straight. Males are also slightly smaller and get black coloration in their fins at breeding time. A 20 gallon was set up with no light overhead, a large plastic plant, some driftwood, and a few scattered leaves. 82 degrees tapwater was used, since enough rainwater was not available. It was felt that tapwater was the reason for a very low egg hatch rate. A heavily run sponge filter kept the water clean and clear.

It took about a week for the pair to become comfortable in the tank, but one day many hundred eggs were seen scattered over the bottom, and the adults did not seem to be eating them. About half of the eggs were left in the breeding tank and half were removed, rinsed, and put into rainwater with methylene blue. In 3 days, only 15 eggs hatched in the rainwater, but none in the tapwater. The fry can begin eating baby brine shrimp, are translucent, difficult to see, and move slowly while hiding as best they can. It was at least a month before they began coming out and swimming in the open, quite atypical for this fast moving fish! After that they had excellent appetites and grew quite fast.

Metynnis argenteus is an attractive, schooling fish well suited for a community aquarium. If one wanted to accept the challenge of breeding them, I would strongly recommend using soft water and a large tank!

my personal favorites.

Unlike most of our empirically clean aquariums it is much different in nature. Leaf litter, fallen tree branches, decomposing matter, and microorganisms are plentiful. Using leaves is the most common starting point. Oak leaves are very plentiful in our area and can be collected once they have fallen. Dry, dead, clean leaves are what you want to use. Leaves can be cleaned by soaking or boiling them.

You can add leaves directly to your tank after soaking and they will sink soon after. Leaves will slowly add a brown coloring to your water (tannins) which is a more natural color in the wild. These tannins will lower your pH, which is great for breeding. Tannins have been proven to lower stress, add antibacterial properties, enhance fish coloring, and several other beneficial characteristics. The dark coloring is not for everyone but your fish will love it. Next time you're bored give this a shot!



GRAND VALLEY AQUARIUM CLUB
P.O. Box 325
Grandville, MI 49418
Address correction required

GRAND VALLEY AQUARIUM CLUB

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of every month at 7 PM (See inside for detailed schedule).

MEETING LOCATION:

Home School Building Gym
5625 Burlingame Ave SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

Store Discounts at Blue Fish Aquarium*

10% off livestock
Club Nights - Tuesdays & Wednesdays
20% off livestock
10% off bulk food and frozen food
(does not include 5 lb boxes or live food)

Store Discounts at Watercolors Aquarium Gallery*

20% off livestock

***Must show GVAC membership card to receive discounts.**

GVAC APPAREL!

- T-shirts
- Jackets
- Hats
- Coolers
- ...and more!

Order forms available at club meetings, see Andrew and Heather Kalafut to order.

IN THIS ISSUE...

- The beginning of 2017 HAP and BAP
- BAP and HAP recap
- Spring Auction
- Roger's Sale
- and more!*

