

ISSUE 1
SUMMER 2026

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM
AQUATIC SPECIALIST

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Aquatic Spec

Expert advice for aquarium & pond enthusiasts

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the very first edition of Aquatic Spec.

Whether you're caring for your first aquarium, maintaining a thriving reef tank or enjoying the peace of a garden pond, thank you for joining us.

After more than 25 years working professionally with aquariums and ponds, I've been fortunate to help thousands of fishkeepers create healthier, more enjoyable aquatic environments. Over the years I've realised that the same questions, challenges and exciting discoveries are shared by hobbyists everywhere. That's what inspired me to create Aquatic Spec.

This free quarterly magazine (for subscribers) brings together practical advice, seasonal tips, fishkeeping knowledge and aquascaping inspiration from across the aquatic hobby. Rather than repeating information found elsewhere, every issue will be based on real-world experience, highlighting methods and recommendations that I use myself and trust.

Inside this first issue you'll find advice on summer pond care, a look at some of the most popular gourami species, ideas for creating a beautiful nano reef aquarium, inspiration for low-tech aquascaping and reviews of products I've personally used. You'll also discover our latest books and resources, designed to help you continue learning at your own pace.

I hope Aquatic Spec becomes something you look forward to reading every season. My aim is simple: to share honest, practical advice that helps you enjoy the hobby and gives your fish and plants the best possible care.

I'd also love this magazine to become a community. If you have an aquarium, pond or aquascape you're proud of, or a story you'd like to share, please send us your photographs. Selected submissions will feature in future editions of Aquatic Spec.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoy our very first issue.
Happy fishkeeping,
Richard Trim
Founder, Aquatic Specialist



Richard Trim

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SUMMER POND CARE



Keeping Your Pond Healthy During the Warmest Months of the Year

Summer is one of the most enjoyable times to own a garden pond. Water lilies are in full bloom, marginal plants are thriving and fish are at their most active. However, it's also the season when ponds face their greatest challenges. Warm water naturally holds less oxygen, fish become more active and require more oxygen, and longer daylight hours encourage algae growth.

With a few simple maintenance routines, you can keep your pond healthy throughout the summer and avoid many of the common problems that arise during hot weather.

Oxygen Matters

One of the biggest risks during summer is low dissolved oxygen.
Fish are often seen gathering near waterfalls, fountains or the pond surface when oxygen levels begin to fall. Hot, still nights are particularly challenging because aquatic plants consume oxygen after dark rather than producing it.

Maintaining good water movement is one of the simplest ways to support oxygen levels. Ensure waterfalls and fountains are running correctly and consider adding an air pump if your pond is heavily stocked or experiences prolonged periods of hot weather.

Professional Tip

If you're concerned about oxygen levels, check your pond early in the morning. This is typically when dissolved oxygen is at its lowest.

Keep Algae Under Control

Sunlight and warm temperatures create ideal conditions for green water and blanket weed.
Rather than relying solely on treatments, aim to create a balanced pond.

Simple steps include:

- Remove excess blanket weed regularly.
- Maintain healthy aquatic plant growth.
- Avoid overfeeding fish.
- Remove decaying leaves and debris.
- Ensure your filtration system is cleaned regularly.
-

A well-balanced pond is naturally more resistant to algae problems.



Maintain Your Equipment

Summer is not the time to discover your pump has stopped working.

Every week, check:
✔️ Pump flow
✔️ Filter performance
✔️ Air pumps
✔️ UV clarifier (if fitted)
✔️ Water level
Cleaning equipment before it becomes heavily blocked will keep everything running efficiently.

Enjoy Your Pond

Summer should be about spending time enjoying your pond rather than constantly fixing problems.

A few minutes of routine maintenance each week will help keep the water clear, the fish healthy and the plants looking their best throughout the season.

Read the Complete Guide
For a detailed professional guide covering algae control, oxygen management, filtration, fish feeding and seasonal maintenance, click the here: Summer Pond Care Guide

www.aquaticspecialistuk.com

Feed Sensibly

Fish have faster metabolisms during summer and are generally more active.

Feed only what your fish will consume within a few minutes.

Overfeeding leaves uneaten food that quickly breaks down, reducing water quality and increasing nutrient levels that encourage algae growth.

TROPICAL FISH SPOTLIGHT: GOURAMIS

Native to Asia, these fascinating labyrinth fish are able to breathe atmospheric air using a specialised organ



The Chocolate Gourami (Sphaerichthys osphromenoides)



Five Popular Gouramis for the Home Aquarium

Few freshwater fish combine colour, personality and elegance quite like gouramis. Native to Asia, these fascinating labyrinth fish are able to breathe atmospheric air using a specialised organ, allowing them to thrive in waters with naturally lower oxygen levels. Their graceful swimming and generally peaceful nature have made them favourites among aquarists for decades.

From vibrant dwarf species to impressive giants, there's a gourami suited to almost every aquarium. Here are five popular species worth considering.

Honey Gourami (Trichogaster chuna)

Small, peaceful and full of character, Honey Gouramis are ideal for planted nano aquariums. During breeding, males develop rich golden-orange colours that contrast beautifully against green aquatic plants.



Dwarf Gourami (Trichogaster lalius)

The Dwarf Gourami remains one of the most popular choices for community aquariums. Males display brilliant blue and red striping, while females are more subtly coloured. They are best suited to peaceful aquariums with plenty of plants and calm tank mates.
Aquatic Specialist Tip
Provide floating plants or tall vegetation to help these fish feel secure and encourage natural behaviour.



Pearl Gourami (Trichopodus leerii)

Often regarded as one of the most beautiful freshwater fish, the Pearl Gourami is covered in tiny pearly white spots with a distinctive dark stripe running along its body. Their calm temperament and elegant appearance make them an excellent choice for larger community aquariums.

Chocolate Gourami (Sphaerichthys osphromenoides)

One of the more challenging species, the Chocolate Gourami requires soft, acidic water and a quiet, well-established aquarium. Although not recommended for beginners, experienced aquarists are rewarded with one of the most unusual and attractive gourami species.

Giant Gourami (Osphronemus goramy)

Despite their name, Giant Gouramis begin life as surprisingly small juveniles before growing into impressive fish capable of exceeding 60 cm in length. They require very large aquariums or indoor ponds and are best suited to experienced keepers prepared for their eventual size.



Which Gourami Is Right for You?

Whether you're setting up your first planted aquarium or looking for a stunning centrepiece fish, there's a gourami to suit almost every level of experience. The key is choosing a species that matches the size of your aquarium and the needs of your existing fish.

For detailed care information on each species, including aquarium requirements, feeding, compatibility and long-term care, visit the Knowledge Centre on the Aquatic Specialist website for the full detailed article.



FIVE FISH PERFECT FOR A NANO REEF AQUARIUM

A nano reef aquarium proves that you don't need a huge tank to enjoy the beauty and diversity of marine fish. With careful planning and the right livestock, even aquariums under 100 litres can become thriving miniature reef ecosystems full of colour and personality. The key to success is selecting species that remain relatively small, are reef-safe and can comfortably live within the limited space available. Here are five excellent choices.

Ocellaris Clownfish (Amphiprion ocellaris)
Perhaps the world's best-known marine fish, the Ocellaris Clownfish is an excellent choice for beginners and experienced reef keepers alike. Hardy, colourful and full of personality, they adapt well to aquarium life and do not require an anemone to thrive.
Best for: Beginners

Firefish Goby (Nemateleotris magnifica)
Elegant and peaceful, the Firefish Goby adds movement and vibrant colour to any nano reef. Their striking white body, yellow head and vivid orange-red dorsal fin make them one of the most eye-catching fish available.
As excellent jumpers, a secure lid is essential.
Best for: Peaceful reef aquariums



Neon Goby (Elacatinus oceanops)
Tiny but incredibly useful, the Neon Goby often acts as a cleaner fish by removing parasites and dead tissue from larger tank mates. Its brilliant electric-blue stripe also provides a splash of colour in smaller reef systems.
Best for: Small community reefs





Royal Gramma (Gramma loreto)
With its distinctive purple front half and bright yellow rear, the Royal Gramma is one of the most recognisable reef fish. It spends much of its time exploring caves and rocky overhangs, making it an excellent addition to aquariums with plenty of live rock.
Best for: Colourful mixed reefs

Yellowtail Blue Damsel (Chrysiptera parasema)
Unlike many damselfish, the Yellowtail Blue Damsel is generally less aggressive and adapts well to nano reef aquariums. Its vivid royal-blue body and bright yellow tail provide a striking contrast against corals.
Best for: Active reef displays



Choosing Fish Carefully
Although these species are all suitable for smaller reef aquariums, stocking should always be conservative. Overcrowding increases stress, reduces water quality and places additional pressure on biological filtration. Introduce fish gradually, maintain stable water parameters and prioritise compatibility over simply adding more species.
A well-planned nano reef often contains fewer fish than expected, but each one has room to display its natural behaviour and colours.

Learn More
Want to create your own thriving nano reef?

Visit the Aquatic Specialist Knowledge Centre for our full guide click the link here: 5 Fish for a Nano Reef Aquarium

You'll find detailed care advice, aquarium requirements and tips for building a beautiful, balanced marine aquarium.

THE AQUASCAPER : CREATING A BEAUTIFUL LOW-TECH PLANTED AQUARIUM



The above image is of a 300L low tech planted aquarium maintained by Aquatic Specialist.

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Many people believe that a stunning planted aquarium requires expensive CO_2 systems, specialist lighting and constant maintenance. In reality, some of the most attractive aquascapes rely on simplicity rather than complexity.

A well-planned low-tech aquarium can provide lush plant growth, healthy fish and a natural underwater landscape while remaining affordable and easy to maintain. By choosing the right plants and taking a balanced approach, almost anyone can create a thriving aquascape.

Start with the Right Plants

Success begins by selecting species that naturally grow well without added carbon dioxide.

Some of the best choices include:

- Anubias nana
- Java Fern
- Bucephalandra
- Cryptocoryne wendtii
- Christmas Moss
- Water Sprite
- Dwarf Sagittaria

Make sure these plants are hardy, adaptable and ideal for beginners while still being popular with experienced aquascapers.

Less Is Often More

One of the most common mistakes is trying to include too many different plants, rocks and decorative items. Professional aquascapes usually focus on a small number of carefully selected materials repeated throughout the aquarium. This creates a more natural appearance and allows individual plants to become a feature rather than competing for attention.

Leave open swimming areas for fish and allow the layout room to breathe.

Lighting Matters

Good lighting encourages healthy growth, but more light does not always produce better results.

Excessive lighting without balanced nutrients often leads to algae problems.

Aim for approximately six to eight hours of quality lighting each day and adjust gradually based on plant growth rather than following a fixed rule.

Patience Creates Beautiful Aquascapes

The most impressive planted aquariums are rarely finished in a single day.

Plants require time to establish, spread and mature. Regular trimming and small adjustments over several months gradually transform an aquarium into a balanced underwater landscape.

Patience is often the most valuable piece of equipment an aquascaper can own.

A Fluval Betta Aquarium set up as a low tech planted aquarium



Professional Tip

Choose plants that naturally suit your maintenance routine rather than selecting the most demanding species.
A healthy, low-maintenance aquarium you'll enjoy for years is far more rewarding than a high-maintenance layout that becomes difficult to manage.

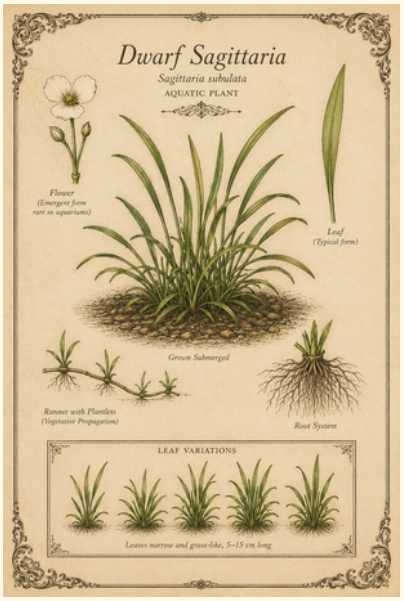
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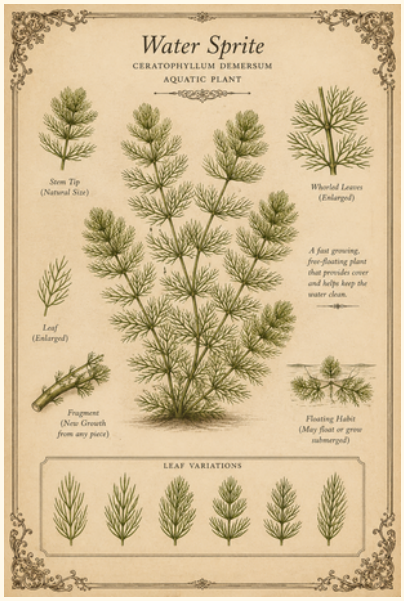
Looking for inspiration?

Visit the Aquatic Specialist Knowledge Centre on our website for our complete guide:

10 Great Plants for a Low-Tech Nano Aquascape

You'll also find planting advice, species profiles and practical aquascaping ideas based on real aquariums.









Read the full review:

Visit the Knowledge Centre.

Fluval Betta Aquarium

A stylish home for one of the world's most popular aquarium fish

Beautifully designed and compact, the Fluval Betta Aquarium offers a modern alternative to the small bowls and novelty tanks that are unfortunately still marketed for Betta fish.

What we liked

✔️ Excellent build quality
✔️ Attractive design
✔️ Integrated filtration
✔️ LED lighting
✔️ Ideal size for a single Betta

Things to consider

• Additional live plants improve the aquarium further.
• Heating is still essential for tropical fish.
• Avoid overcrowding.

Verdict

★★★★☆

A well-designed aquarium that provides an attractive and practical home for a Betta when correctly maintained.

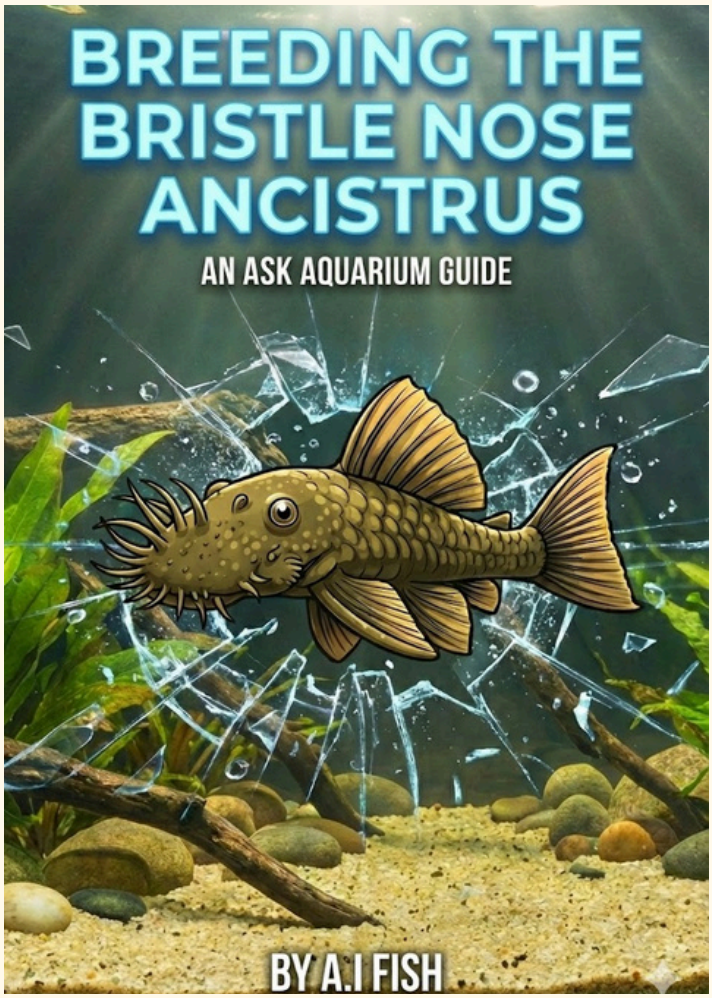


BOOKS & RESOURCES

Continue Your Fishkeeping Journey

Whether you're breeding tropical fish, creating a planted aquarium or simply looking to learn more about the hobby, our growing collection of practical guides is designed to help you build your knowledge with confidence.

Every book is written from real-world experience gained over more than 25 years of maintaining aquariums and ponds professionally.



Click below to buy on

AMAZON KINDLE

Featured Book:

Breeding the Bristle Nose Ancistrus

A practical guide to breeding one of the world's favourite aquarium catfish. The Bristle Nose Ancistrus has earned a reputation as one of the most rewarding freshwater fish to keep and breed. Peaceful, hardy and fascinating to observe, they are an excellent choice for both beginners and experienced aquarists.

Whether your goal is to breed your first successful batch of fry or to better understand the behaviour of these remarkable fish, this guide takes you through every stage of the process using practical techniques developed through years of real-world fishkeeping experience.

Inside you'll discover:

- Choosing healthy breeding adults.
- Setting up the ideal breeding aquarium.
- Water conditions that encourage spawning.
- Feeding and conditioning your fish.
- Caring for eggs and raising healthy fry.
- Avoiding the most common breeding mistakes.

Beautifully illustrated and written in a clear, practical style, this guide is designed to help aquarists achieve success while understanding why each stage of the breeding process matters.
Available now for Amazon Kindle.
Discover this book and explore our growing collection of fishkeeping guides by visiting:

www.aquaticspecialistuk.com/our-books

Showcase Aquarium

Not every successful planted aquarium relies on high-tech equipment. This beautiful freshwater aquarium demonstrates how careful planning, suitable plant selection and consistent maintenance can create an impressive display that remains practical for everyday fishkeepers.
The aquarium is planted with a variety of hardy species that thrive without pressurised CO_2, providing natural shelter for the fish while maintaining a vibrant green appearance throughout the year.

A community of peaceful tropical fish brings movement and colour to the aquascape, while the natural wood and planting create a balanced layout that continues to mature over time.
Like all successful aquariums, the secret isn't expensive equipment—it's regular maintenance, patience and understanding the needs of both the fish and the plants.



Aquarium Facts

- **S**tyle: Low-tech planted aquarium
- Plants: Easy-care freshwater species
- Livestock: Peaceful tropical community fish
- Maintenance: Professionally maintained
- Experience Level: Suitable for most aquarists

Would you like your aquarium featured in a future issue of Aquatic Spec?

We'd love to see your aquarium, pond or reef aquarium.

Send your photographs to:
aquaticspecialistuk@gmail.com

Next Issue:

Coming this Autumn

Inside our Autumn edition you'll discover:

🍂 Preparing Your Pond for Autumn
🐟 Corydoras Catfish Spotlight
🌿 Aquascaping with Cryptocoryne
🔧 Choosing the Right Pond Pump
📖 Featured Book
📸 Reader Aquariums

Thank you for reading the first issue of Aquatic Spec.
We hope you've enjoyed this collection of practical advice, inspiration and professional experience.

Visit our Knowledge Centre for more expert articles, explore our growing collection of Books & Resources, and keep an eye out for the Autumn edition.

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