

MARINE AQUARIST® FREE

DEDICATED TO SUCCESSFUL SALTWATER AQUARIUM KEEPING

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Mike & Terry Lauderdale's 300 gallon SPS Reef

Terry and I have been keeping aquariums for about three decades. Back in the '80s, our first marine aquarium was 29 gallons with under-gravel filtration and standard florescent lamps. Because information was hard to find at the time, we relied on just a few books and advice from fellow hobbyists and local fish store shoppers. We learned mainly from tedious but insightful trial and error. As the years progressed, technology certainly made the entire process easier, but the "old school" fundamentals we first learned were definitely the most important. The key success in reef keeping is based on a solid foundation of husbandry practices performed regularly, coupled with the use of the absolute best quality equipment for consumption and maintenance.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

-Aristotle

Aristotle's famous words on excellence can be applied to any practice. To remind ourselves the importance of consistency and discipline to success, we keep this quote framed next to our aquarium. Our aquarium husbandry has not achieved perfection yet, but we always strive for excellence with our daily habits:

- Frequent 10% water changes with Marine Environment®
- Mechanical filtration, filter socks that are changed every 4 to 5 days



- Heavy protein skimming, with weekly cleaning of the neck and head
- Frequent testing of important water parameters: pH, Ca, Alk., Mg, Sr and
- Quarterly maintenance of pumps and overflows
- Monthly cleaning of light fixtures and bulbs; prompt replacement of bulbs as they show color shifts

Keeping a maintenance log and journal is also an important habit for control. This can be as simple as a white board or notebook, and an Excel spreadsheet or one of the many aquarium maintenance software programs and apps that are currently available for download.

We always keep track of our day to day maintenance work, newly added livestock, and any problems or unusual events that occur on a monthly basis. This monthly log info is then compiled into an ongoing journal so that we have a document to reference for future questions. Although this may seem tedious, documenting data accurately is essential for aquarium system stability.

Quarantine

An important practice that we have improved over the years is our quarantine process. We maintain our quarantine procedure constantly and consistently, making sure it is readily available for use if a new arrival or a sick or injured animal needs special care. The tank is modestly sized (20gal.) to keep costs down and maintenance easy. In our experience, the advantages of a rigorous quarantine process for new animals far exceed the devastation that could arise from a disease outbreak. ♦

*Part 2 continued in the next issue.

MARINE AQUARIST® was created for the benefit of amateur and professional marine aquarists. Topics may include: water chemistry, system design, filtration, lighting, nutrition, mariculture, aquatic and chemical science, and the collecting, shipping, importing, selling and keeping of many forms of marinelife in captivity.

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