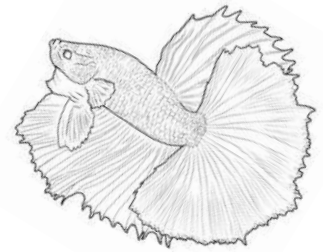
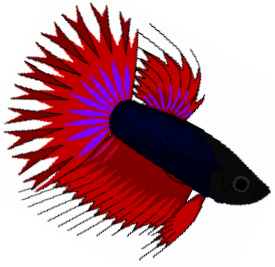


How to NOT Kill Your Betta





About Bettas

- ♦ **Scientific Name:** *Betta splendens*
 - ♦ One of over 70 “betta” species!
- ♦ **Country of Origin:** Thailand
- ♦ **Correct pronunciation:** “bet-tah” not “bay-tuh”
 - ♦ *But we honestly don’t care*

Member of suborder Anabantoidei—characterized by specialized labyrinth organ

Allows for oxygen exchange using air!

Survival mechanism when water is scarce—not a life choice!

Betta Aggression

- ♦ Betta males can be very aggressive towards other males and even their own reflection
- ♦ Will be seen “flaring” or raising their operculums to appear larger and charging other male bettas
- ♦ Not recommended to mix males (all colorful/”pretty” bettas = males)
- ♦ Okay, in some circumstances, to mix females (not all play nice with others)



Many colors and varieties of bettas

- ♦ Veiltail
- ♦ Crowntail
- ♦ Halfmoon
- ♦ Delta tail

- ♦ Elephant ear
- ♦ And more!

Betta colors can change with age, water chemistry and genetics!



Betta Tanks



All bettas MUST be kept in a filtered tank!
Bowls are not appropriate for ANY fish!

Your Betta's Ideal Home

- ♦ **At LEAST 5 gallons**

And you can always go bigger! More water is always a good idea, no matter which species of fish you keep.

- ♦ **Heated to 78-82°F (25-28°C)**

Bettas are TROPICAL fish and require heat. They do not usually do well with “preset” heaters, since these tend to be a little cold. If your betta is too cold, their immune function, digestion and metabolism will be faulty.

- ♦ **Low-flow filter**

Many filters on the market are not great for bettas, do to their limited swimming abilities. If you have your betta in a large tank, you do NOT have to match the filter output to the tank size. Go with a smaller filter, turn the flow all the way down or diffuse the flow before it hits the water surface.

- ♦ **Not too many decorations**

Yes, a large tank with one or a few fish is not the prettiest, so many newbies will try to crowd their tank with lots of “stuff.” Betta fins are easily snagged on décor so try a “less is more” approach. Yes, you can certainly add live plants; properly quarantined of course.

- ♦ **Lots of rest spots**

Betta fins weigh them down, requiring frequent rest stops. Flat, unobstructed places to rest, such as betta leaves or flat-top décor items are a great addition to your betta tank.

- ♦ **Only one fish please!**

Yes, there are obvious exceptions to this rule, but for you novice betta keepers, stick to one fish to start. Males can be extremely territorial, and even some females, and fight each other to the death. You might think their “flaring” behavior is “cute,” but it is an obvious sign they are agitated. No mirrors please! And if you mix species, your betta may or may not be aggressive, so be very careful when introducing other species, properly quarantined of course!

Care & Maintenance

Maintenance Guide

No fish, including bettas, are “maintenance free” pets. All fish tanks require just as much care as a cat or a dog! Check out our video about how to best clean your fishes’ tank.

Watch here: <http://bit.ly/fishtankclean>



Tank Care Checklist

Now that you know how to clean your tank, here are the tasks you need to complete on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis!

Daily

- _____ Remove excess food
- _____ Monitor water level and top off if necessary
- _____ Evaluate fish swimming behavior and appetite (make note if anything seems different)
- _____ Check water temperature

Weekly

- _____ 10% water change using gravel siphon (OR 25% every other week)
- _____ **Please note: this is only a general guideline. Cleaning frequency and volume will be determined by bioload, diet, size of tank and filtration capability.**
- _____ Perform water quality testing if new fish or equipment have been added within last 2 months
- _____ Scrub algae from sides of aquarium using appropriate tool (glass or acrylic?)
- _____ Rinse biological filtration gently in tank water from water change
- _____ Remove dead leaves from live plants

**Never replace your filter pads!
These should last for YEARS!!**

Monthly

- _____ Rinse biological filtration gently in tank water from water change
- _____ Perform water quality testing if NO new fish or equipment have been added within last 2 mo
- _____ Remove décor and scrub separately
- _____ Vacuum gravel under décor

Yearly

- _____ Buy new water test kit

Having trouble remembering to do your maintenance?

- > ***Put it on your calendar!***
- > ***Get the whole family involved!***
- > ***Maintenance is NOT optional!***

Feeding

Betta Nutrition

Here are a few key points to selecting the betta food that is best for you:

- ♦ Bettas are carnivorous, but they can absolutely eat veggies
- ♦ Look for a protein content of around 35% and low fat around 5%
- ♦ Betta pellet size varies WIDELY so there is NO # of pellet approach
- ♦ Your betta will NOT finish the container—replace every 6 months

Our Favorite Betta Food



Hikari Tropical Betta Bio-Gold
(in the bag, not the cardboard package)

How Often to Feed

Bettas are tropical fish and have faster metabolism than fish kept at room temperature, such as goldfish. Therefore, it is best to feed your betta twice a day.

How Much to Feed

Since pellet size varies, we recommend feeding the # of pellets that would, theoretically, fit inside your fish's eyeball. This may be as few as 2-3 or up to 6-7, depending on your type of food.



Bettas are at serious risk for being overfed!

Monitor your diet carefully, but do not underfeed.

Common Diseases

Signs of Disease

Many signs of disease in bettas are general signs and require further investigation.
These clinical signs include:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| ♦ Decreased appetite | ♦ Fin rot |
| ♦ Increased lethargy | ♦ Fungal growth |
| ♦ Fin tears/rips | ♦ Pale gills |

If you see any of these signs—check your water chemistry!

*****Don't use test strips! Use liquid-based kit!*****

Ranges available here:

<https://cafishvet.com/water-quality/water-quality-ranges/>

Water chemistry bad? —> Water change

Water chemistry good? —> Call your vet

To find a fish veterinarian near you, visit:

American Association of Fish Veterinarians

<https://FISHVETS.org>

World Aquatic Veterinary Medical Association

<https://WAVMA.org>

Is your betta blowing bubbles?

This is VERY common in male bettas. They are preparing to breed by building a bubble nest for the eggs.

Does your betta look fat?

Bettas are prone to overeating, and immediate veterinary care is the best chance for survival. Bettas can also get internal tumors and bacterial growths called granulomas that require a veterinary diagnosis.

Is your betta changing color?

Color change in bettas is a normal occurrence with age, genetics and water chemistry.