

# Care of Freshwater Fish

## Live Material Care Guide



### Background

Freshwater fish are easy to care for and provide many opportunities for learning in any classroom. A classroom aquarium is an entire ecosystem in just a couple of feet of space. This ecosystem includes the nitrogen cycling bacteria and photosynthetic algae that form biofilms on the surfaces, protozoa in the filter, aquatic plants, and of course the fish. The fish population provides an opportunity to study animal behavior; from the schooling danio and tetra to aggressive cichlids, each tank offers a chance to study social, feeding, and maybe even breeding behavior.

### Housing and Food Requirements

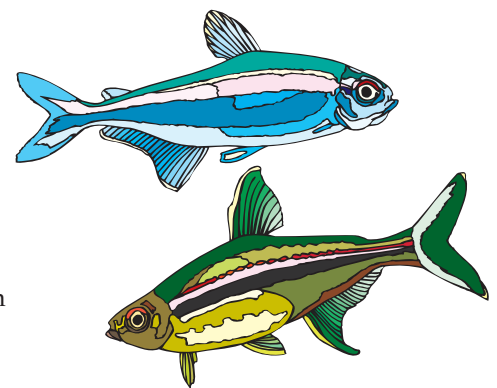
Name	Behavior	School	Tank Area	Length (inches)	Temperature (°F)	Optimal pH	Food
Black Molly	Community	May school	Mid-tank	2–3	72–82	7.0–8.0	Flakes and Algae
Cardinal Tetra	Community	Schools of 5+	Mid-tank	2–3	72–78	5.5–6.5	Flakes and Live
Algae Eater	Aggressive as adults	No	Bottom	4–6	75–82	6.0–8.0	Algae and Algae Wafers
Clown Loach	Community	Schools of 3+	Bottom	1–3	72–85	6.7–7.5	Flakes and Live
Goldfish	Community	Schools	Mid-tank	1.5–12	65–75	7–7.8	Flakes
Guppy	Community	Schools of 3+	Top and Mid-tank	1.5–2.5	68–80	6.8–8.0	Flakes
Platy	Community	Schools	Mid-tank	2–3	68–80	6.8–8.0	Flakes and Live
Swordtail	Community	Schools	Mid-tank	2.5–4	70–80	6.8–8.0	Flakes and Live
Zebra Danio	Community	Schools of 3+	Mid-tank	1.5–2	64–75	6.0–8.0	Flakes and Live

### Safety Precautions

*Always treat live organisms with respect and proper care. Wash hands thoroughly before leaving the lab. Follow all laboratory safety guidelines.*

### Tips

- Swordtails and loaches are notorious for jumping out of the tank. Cover all openings in the top of the tank.
- Many algae eater species are semi-aggressive as adults. Watch for aggressive behavior or nipped scales and fins on tank-mates.
- Black mollies, guppies, platys, and swordtails bear live young and will cannibalize their fry. Provide decorations and plants so the fry can hide.
- Aquariums containing clown loaches should only be treated with scaleless-fish medications and treatments.
- Loaches are very active and can stress docile fish.
- Do not house loaches and snails together. Loaches love to eat snails!
- Contact Flinn Scientific and request Bio Fax Publication No.10984 for information about setting up a classroom aquarium.



Disposal

Organisms raised in the classroom should not be released into the wild. Deceased animals may be disposed of according to Flinn suggested Biological Waste Disposal Method Type IV. Please consult your current *Flinn Scientific Catalog/Reference Manual* for general guidelines and specific procedures, and review all federal, state and local regulations that may apply, before proceeding.

Materials for *Care of Freshwater Fish* are available from Flinn Scientific, Inc.

Catalog No.	Description
LM1224	Common Guppy, pkg of 6
LM1264	Goldfish, pkg of 12
FB0281	20-gallon aquarium, complete with tank and hood

Consult your *Flinn Scientific Catalog/Reference Manual* for current prices.