

# Intro to Keeping FRESHWATER SHRIMP

Providing a current with a small internal pump will allow vampire shrimp to catch particles of food as they come floating by and also be very interesting to observe. In a small tank consider offering fine powder food but in a large tank with live plants there should be enough natural foods available.



## **Japanese Algae Eating (Amano) Shrimp**

*Caridina multidentata*  
pH 7.0-7.5  
Temp range 68°F-84°F  
Max size 1.5 inches

Amano are renowned for their appetite for

algae, making them a top choice for planted aquarists. Their color is not nearly as eye catching as the Red Cherry and Crystal Red Shrimp, but their benefits more than make up for that. They love densely planted aquariums that provide them an abundance of natural foods and plenty of places to perch.

Caring for Amano shrimp is relatively easy. They prefer a slightly more alkaline water and higher temperature that fall in line with most other aquarium fish.

## Tankmates

Be extra careful about is choosing tank mates for your shrimp. In the wild, shrimp are the natural prey of almost every species of fish. But there are a few options of animals you can keep with your shrimp. Nano fish and a variety of snails will most likely be unable to harm adult shrimp and, while they may occasionally eat baby shrimp, shouldn't impact the population.



Keeping different varieties of the same species of shrimp is certainly possible, but keep in mind that you will most likely end up with them interbreeding and "muddying up" the characteristics that define those varieties. If that is not a concern for you, it is certainly possible to keep a variety of colors and patterns in one aquarium.

In the end beauty is in the eye of the beholder and creating your own aquarium that you are passionate for is what it is all about. Expand, explore and enjoy all of what these little shrimp have to offer.



Photos by Rachel O'leary  
Aquascape by Kevin Kelly



Photo by Mo Devlin

# Segrest Farms

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Some photos supplied by Mo Devlin and Rachel O'leary

Dwarf freshwater shrimp are not only the perfect inhabitant of a nano tank, they are also full of charm and, given proper care, quite hardy.

From the seasoned hobbyist to the new aquarium adventurist, this is a great animal to consider keeping. With these shrimp you can really dream big but think small. Success with shrimp starts with the water they're kept in and some other simple things to be aware of. Here are some tips to beginning your journey into this underwater micro world of simplicity and beauty.

## Aquarium Size & Décor



Photo by Michael Skiba

### Tank Size

Although these shrimp are great for smaller aquariums poor water chemistry is deadly to them. Consider starting with a tank that has a large surface area rather than height. The larger the surface, the more beneficial bacteria is present and the easier it is to maintain water quality. A 10 gallon tank would be a great place to start!

### Substrate

Small fine gravel or substrate for planted aquariums make a perfect habitat. Dark substrates will also enhance the visually dynamic colors of the shrimp.

### Live Plants

Shrimp will thrive in planted aquariums. Hardy low light plants such as Anubias, Java Fern, Crypts and Mosses all make great choices for the beginning shrimp enthusiast.

### Décor

Artificial decorations can be used but adding some natural rocks and driftwood will provide organics for grazing as well as cover for baby shrimp. Be aware that some rocks can alter pH so be sure to ask an employee before using them.

### Filtration

Shrimp are prone to getting sucked up in filter intakes. Sponge filters<sup>1</sup> are one of the best options or covering a filter intake with fine mesh<sup>2</sup> can also work. Mesh can clog quickly so make sure to clean it often to ensure your filter works at the optimum capacity.



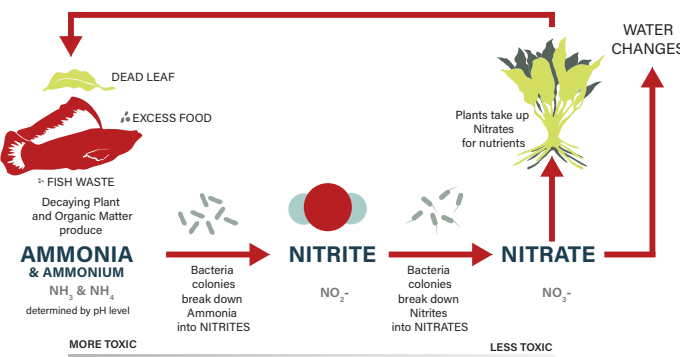
## Cycling Your Fish Tank

Shrimp are much more sensitive to nitrogenous waste than most fish so you need to ensure that your tank is well cycled before adding them. Cycling an aquarium is a huge topic that can be addressed on its own, but there are a few things to keep in mind.

### How should you cycle a shrimp aquarium?

Perhaps the best method is using the fishless cycle, where you dose your aquarium with pure ammonia to feed and colonize your beneficial bacteria. Alternatively, if you are going to keep fish with your shrimp you can cycle with the fish before adding them. Testing your water is the only way to know that your tank has fully cycled and keeping an eye on the ammonia and Nitrite during the cycle if using fish. On average it takes about 6-8 weeks for the good bacteria colonize before safely adding shrimp. There are many options to help speed along the cycle, from weeks to days! Ask your local pet shop for advice which one is best for you.

Overfeeding is easy to do and can quickly cause the Ammonia and Nitrite rise to toxic levels. There are specific foods made for shrimp and be sure to feed only what can be consumed entirely in 1 minute. Check with you local store for recommendations and how much to feed.



## Medication

Shrimp are extremely sensitive to being medicated and will often perish under most treatments. If you need to medicate a shrimp tank it is best to remove all of them before beginning treatment or consider moving the affected fish and treating them in a separate tank.



Photo by Mike Dawlin

## What Shrimp Should I Choose?

There is a wide variety of shrimp available, but the most popular largely fall into one of a few different types.

### Red Cherry Varieties

*Neocaridina heteropoda*  
pH 6.0-8.0  
Temp range from 70°F-80°F  
Max Size 1 inch

With good water conditions, these are adaptable and beginner friendly with many color varieties to choose from.



### Crystal Red Varieties

*Caridina cantonensis*  
pH 6.5-7.5  
Temp range from 60°F-70°F  
Max Size 1 inch

Like the Red Cherry Shrimp varieties, *Caridina cantonensis* can be found in a large number of varieties, including Crystal Red, Bee, King Kong, and Tiger Shrimp.

Among serious shrimp keepers, there is a surprising range of "grades" that showcase distinct traits. The higher grades often come with a price tag to match. Crystal Red Shrimp are more sensitive to water conditions and cannot handle the range of chemistry that Red Cherries can. They need to be kept in relatively soft, slightly acidic water and also prefer slightly cooler temperature.



### Vampire Shrimp *Atya gabonensis*

pH 6.5-8.0 • Temperature range 76°F-80°F • Max size 6 inches

Vampire shrimp are a little different from other shrimp in that not only do they grow a bit larger but they are also filter feeders. They are great for beginners as they are hardy and more adapted to a wide range of water chemistry. The larger size and friendly behavior also make it easier to add various community fish and dwarf shrimp as well.



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