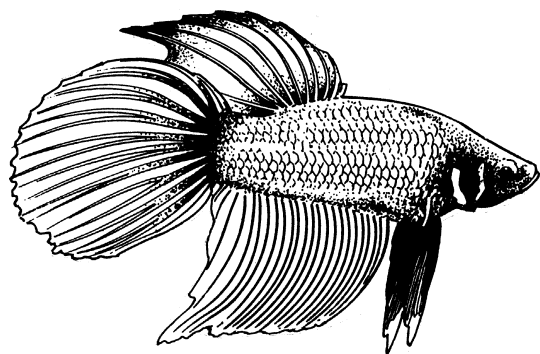


Basic Information on **BETTAS**



If you're looking for an unusual addition to your home aquarium or an attractive, easy-to-maintain desk pet, then a *Betta splendens* may be the fish for you!

Bettas – or Siamese Fighting Fish, as they are commonly called – have been kept as pets since the beginning of the fish keeping hobby. They are available in two different fin types. Both of these, the single tail and the more rare double tailed variety, come in a wide range of colors – including peacock blue, scarlet red, even emerald green. Though females are similarly colored, the males of this species sport the longer, more extravagant fins.

The betta belongs to the family of fish known as anabantoids. These fish possess the ability to breathe atmospheric oxygen. This gives the betta versatility as an aquarium fish, permitting them to be kept in aquariums as well as bowls like those commonly used for goldfish.

Before introducing your pet betta to its new home, make the water safe by adding a water conditioner/chlorine neutralizer to tap water. Chlorine normally found in tap water will burn the gills of the betta (or any fish) and kill them. **DO NOT** use distilled water, it is "too pure." Dechlorinated tap water is best.

Bettas are carnivores and enjoy a varied diet. A quality fish food made specifically for bettas should form the basis of the daily feeding schedule. They will also enjoy regular offerings of brine shrimp, flake food, blood worms, or any live or frozen foods. Your betta can be fed daily provided that all food is consumed within a few minutes of that feeding.

Male bettas are very aggressive towards other males of the species. In fact, they are aggressive to any other fish with eye-catching, flag-like fins. Only one male betta can be kept per aquarium or bowl. Females do not normally display this aggressive nature and may be housed together.

Because of the variety of colors available, many hobbyists prefer to have several bettas, keeping each male in his own individual bowl. When placed side by side, adjacent males will commonly flare their beautiful fins as a challenge to their neighbor, which produces an unusual display.

With good care, bettas will live 2 to 3 years. Please see our other handout "Basic Information on a Clean and Healthy Fishbowl" for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: The information on this handout is very basic. There are several good books available in our book department on the care and maintenance of bettas.

