

Young fish in your aquarium

At last... a new generation has arrived in the aquarium and everyone's thrilled with this exciting diversion. With some fish, everything goes swimmingly - with others, the young suddenly disappear without trace. Experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo explain how aquarium enthusiasts can assist in making sure everything works out well.

There are times when one is almost drowning in young fish - armoured catfish and guppies are extremely enthusiastic breeders under ideal conditions. But there are also other cases where the next generation just doesn't want to happen. In fact, the fish do breed successfully and before long the young are hatching out but from one day to the next they're all gone... Where did they go? Maybe they got sucked into the filter? A fine mesh screen placed over the end of the suction opening will help prevent this. It's much more likely, though, that the parents or other fellow flat-mates have been savouring the tiddlers. One reason for this could be, for instance, that your aquarium has too few hiding places. You can create welcome retreats with roots, stones and plants.

SUCCESS WITH A BREEDING TANK

It may be that you have a few gluttonous fish in your aquarium that are very partial to small fry. Angel fish and coloured

THE SPAWN BOX ALTERNATIVE

If an additional breeding tank is out of the question and, despite a well structured interior, the young still don't survive, then a spawning box can help. A spawning female (of the live bearing variety) should only be kept there for as short a time as possible as the cramped surroundings become stressful in time. It's better to wait until the eggs are deposited in the tank and then transfer them to the box. During the few days before and after hatching, the larvae feed from the yolk sac; after that you should feed them with dust food or artemia nauplii several times a day as required. As soon as the fish are one to two centimetres long, you can release them into the tank.



perch are among them. An additional breeding tank can help here. Either put a spawn-ready pair or a pregnant female (in the case of live bearing fish) straight in, or wait until the spawn has been laid or the young fish have hatched.

A breeding tank can be spartan in its accommodation

but frequent water changes are necessary. Kit out a roughly 30 to 40 litre tank with a small cartridge heater, a filter, a thin layer of chalk-free sand and a few stones. Add a few tufts of Java moss and floating plants... job done. Now fill the breeding tank with water from the keeping tank and slowly equalise the temperature.

The eggs, larva or young fish should not come into contact with the air when being transferred - use a jar for this. You will have to start feeding the little ones shortly thereafter when they're swimming freely. Minute offspring, like those of characin, barbel and labyrinth fish need fluid or dust food whereas larger species (coloured perch, tooth carp) can mostly manage to eat artemia nauplii (the larvae of small shrimps). You should feed them several times a day: little and often is best.

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