

The Betta Splendens

The bettas surely belong to the most interesting and most colourful fishes in the aquarium. Based on a little red-blue fish with short fins (the origin), they start their triumphal procession in all possible fin forms and colours, into the aquariums of the whole world.

Betta Splendens: is derived from latin and means magnificently, splendid, shining.

Origin and geographical extension: Cambodia, Thailand, south Vietnam, Malaisian peninsula, Indonesia.

Habitat: little stagnant waters, afloat grasslands, puddles, tarns, rice fields, swamp- and moor forests.

Behaviour: relatively aggressive species, hardly district-building.

Size: 4 to 7 cm without fins

Sexual differences: The male normally is somewhat larger. The males (also the Plakat) have longer fins than the females.

The female has a clearly visible whitish point, the papilla, on the ventral side between the ventral fins and the anal fin. In the mood of mating or spawning the female normally shows brightens broad bars around the body.

The fin length and form can be very different at both sexes, depending on the breed aim of the breeder.

Age and sexual maturity: The male grows around 2 years old and is suitable best to spawn in the age from 4 to 9 months.

The female grows approx. 2-4 years and can spawn up from 4 months until she is very old.

Reproduction: Egg-laying, bubble-nest-building species.

Special: The name combat fish is due to its aggressive behaviour against male conspecifics.

As soon as he sees another male, he spreads his fins and gills and goes in such a way into threatening position. Often these aggressions within these species are hardly distinctive, while foreign species are not noticed.

The combat fish belong to the group of labyrinth fish. The characteristic of this group is, that they possess a nearly unique respiratory organ, the labyrinth. The labyrinth is located above the gills in the labyrinth cave. The function of this organ is comparable with a lung. That means, a labyrinth fish breathes not only by his gills, but also atmospheric air with his labyrinth. If he could not get air at the water surface, he would drown.



The conditions for the care of Betta Splendens

Aquarium: In order to create a most natural habitat for the combat fish, tanks are sufficient, starting from a volume of 50-60 l. Hands off of so named gold fish balls or "preserving jars", because no fish likes to swim in a circle and would show thereby a very passively behaviour!

Plants for the aquarium: plants for the water surface: *Richia fluitans*, *Pistia stratiotis*, *Lemna minor*, *Ceratopteris cornuta*, *Ceratopteris thalictroides*, *Ceratophyllum demersum*. Plants for the ground: *Microsorium pteropus*, *Vesicularia dubvana*, *Vallisneria spiralis*, *Anubias barteri*, *Hygrophila difformis*, *Hygrophila stricta*, *Nymphaea lotus*.

Possibilities to hide: Roots, coconut paring, clay/stone pots, etc.

Ground: to recommend is dark sand in a grain size between 1-4 mm.

Filtering: which offers only place for a small group of combat fish, the fish could get along also without filtering. But to ensure to get out the suspended materials out of the tank, it recommends using a sponge filter, which does not cause a strong current. Additionally harmful substances are reduced by bacteria in the filter and are converted up in a certain degree into plant nutrients.

Heating: the recommended water temperature should lie between 24-28°C.

The cover: Because combat fish are very good jumper, it is advisable to lock the tank with a windowpane or a commercial cover.

The lighting: For the combat fish the light is not important, but to maintain the balance in the tank, it makes sense to use a lighting. The plants will be pleased, which has also again an indirect effect on the fish.

Water values: PH: 6 bis 8; dGH: 0 bis 15°

Fodder: Mosquito larvae (white), Tubifex, Enchiträen, granulates, Artemia, Daphna, flake fodder, etc.

Caution!!!: Mosquito larvae and Tubifex should be fed max. 2 times in the week, because they are very rich of protein and otherwise it could come easily to an over greasing.

Stocking: In an aquarium as mentioned above, there should be held no more than 1 male with 2 females, because the male has a great requirement for his district area and would not bear any other male. But in principle you should not keep these fish together for a longer time, because also the females are loners.

Other fish:

are suitable as well as coridoras, pictus catfish.

Spawning Betta Splendens

You need: appropriate tank for holding and also for the breeding, which is equipped with many hiding places and plants.

Breeding tank: no interior filter, only a small foam material air lifting filter should be used, because normal interior filters would destroy the sensitive nest and possibly aspirate to the young combat fish.

Temperature: The optimal temperature for spawning is with 26,6°C.

Other water values are not so important, but should of course correspond to the normal conditions for Betta Splendens. The use of dried sea-almond leaves swimming on the water surface here also work stimulating and are an ideal place for the building of the bubble nest.

Pair of Breeders: The selection of the pair of breeders depends on the respective breeding aim of the breeder. But of course in principle only strong, healthy and vital fish should be used to breed with.

District and courtship: The pair, selected on the breeding aim of the breeder, is put into the breeding tank. The male defines his district by appropriate impressing behaviour, whereby also the female at first takes part to the courtship by fin spreading. Finally the male begins to build his bubble nest in a favourable place, preferentially under swimming plants.

The bubble nest is the centre of the district. Only after the nest is finished, the female may approach under it. In mating mood the female shows transversal stripes at the body and swims directly towards the male. The male however swims towards the female with spread fins and tries to lure it under the nest (guidance-swimming). In the beginning the male is still very aggressive under the nest. The appeasing of the male by the female takes place by lowering the head and clamping of the fins. After first body contacts were accomplished, by effortless pushes of the female into the side (short behind the gills) of the male, they started to entwine themselves for spawning. After some pseudo mating whereby the partners adjust themselves hormonal one on the other, it comes to the first spawning. Under light body trembling the eggs and sperm cells are delivered; three to four sec. both partners remain motionless. Immediately after waking up the male begins to in-collect the eggs with the muzzle and to spit them into the bubble nest, whereby he often gets help by the female. After the end of the spawning, the male chases the female in each case out of the interior range of the nest. Therefore now she should be taken out of the breeding tank. Usually there will be between 50 - 250 eggs in one spawning embrace.

Breeding care: After spawning the male alone takes care about the eggs and the nest.

Carefully he shifted the eggs and removed died eggs out of it. The fry needs at 26°C between 24 - 30 hours to hatch out. The hatched larvae then hang, with the head upward in the bubble nest. In this time the male is so busy to hold the larvae in the nest that he hardly do not eat any food.

Raising up the fry: After the hatch of the fry the male takes care about it still for two further days, until the small fish swim horizontally under the nest. Afterwards also the male loses the interest and therefore then has to be removed from the breeding tank. The larvae possess a yolk bag, on that at first they nourish themselves. But nevertheless you should start feeding them by in trade available dust fodder or liquid fodder as fast as possible. Already on the first day the larvae can also be fed with vinegar ales. Subsequently, you should offer additionally also microworms and freshly hatched artemia to them. Usually they can already master also these after one day.

The young fish grow with sufficient varied nutrition and a water temperature of approx. 27°C quite fast and are pubescent after 3 - 4 months.

Important!:

Already after 6 - 8 weeks can be little fights between the fish small!

Therefore you must already begin then to separate the little small males in jars or boxes, to keep the stress in the raising tank as low as possible. Therefore always enough jars or boxes had to be kept available, if you decide to breed Betta Splendens.

