

How I Learned to Love the Tank

I became obsessed with learning as much as I could about the fishkeeping hobby.

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The first fish we put in our tank, a tomato clown, is still swimming three years later. To kick off my new blog, I thought I'd introduce myself. I'm not a fish expert. Not even close. If you're looking for an intelligent discussion about the latest tools, techniques or tricks of the trade, this probably isn't the blog for you.

I'm just a chick who loves saltwater fish and corals.

My fiancé Jeff calls our reef tank the hobby I stole from him. When we met, Jeff was the fish guy. He had maintained a few fish-only tanks over the years, and after a hiatus from fishkeeping, he decided to set up an old 50-gallon tank in his apartment. I came over to visit that weekend and saw the tank filled with nothing but water, sand and a pile of rocks. Having no fish experience myself, I asked where the fish were. I think he explained "cycling" to me, but I was already bored and definitely not listening.

You see, fish were not my thing. Dogs were my thing. Cats were my thing. I liked animals with soft fur and warm bodies that could sit in my lap or welcome me home after a long day. Fish? How boring!

So the tank sat there, and I ignored it. Days, then weeks went by. Jeff added a clean-up crew of snails and hermit crabs. The crabs were kind of cute, so I started peeking into the tank periodically. All sorts of things were starting to grow on the rocks. I didn't know that was going to happen! I had no idea what those things were at the time (I later learned they were mushrooms and feather dusters), but they looked cool. My interest in the tank grew a little.

I came over one day to see that Jeff had added the first fish (who we still have, three years later), a tomato clown. Ooh, Nemo! Now, this I liked. The fish was so pretty! It was much more colorful and active than any of the fish I owned when I was a kid (goldfish and guppies I won at the county fair).

By the time the tank had been up and running for six months, I was completely hooked. I became obsessed with learning as much as I could about the hobby. We tested the water religiously, keeping a log of all the results. We did weekly water changes and kept the tank spotless. I managed to convince Jeff that we needed a reef tank (something he'd never tried before), so we upgraded our lighting and cautiously added coral, one frag at a time.

So, here I am now, hopelessly addicted to our saltwater reef tank. I love our fish, corals, crabs and shrimp. I hate phosphates, algae and Aiptasia. The tank has been through a lot over the years and even survived a move across town. We're planning on upgrading to a 180-gallon tank after our wedding in the fall. (We want tangs!)

This blog will be a place to talk about my reefkeeping trials and successes, and to share the beauty of it all. I hope you enjoy it!

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