

Reestablishing My Setups

Though my systems had achieved a semblance of balance, I decided I want something new.

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Partly because of this blog, I've decided to reestablish three of my old systems, restock them with some new fishes and start over in my hobby. The tanks I had were nice, and I was enjoying them, but I felt I could do better.

I think a lot of hobbyists face this problem. Maybe you're a fishkeeper who has decided to add plants to a fish-only setup. Maybe you keep plants, but you want to switch to a high-light, high-tech setup. Whatever the reason, unless you've got room, time and money for more aquariums, fishes and plants, you're going to have to redo what you've already done.

The task of breaking down an old setup can be an educational experience in itself. I know it was for me. When I took my systems down, I found that a few of the less-visible areas in my heavily planted 10-gallon had grown rather stagnant. I was trying to emulate a system Everglades pygmy sunfish (*Elassoma evergladei*) would find cozy. I never did put a sunfish in the setup, and I'm glad I waited.

I set up this aquarium as a low-light, low-maintenance planted tank inhabited by some of my favorite guppies. They're my favorites because they were given to me by a local fish store owner to cycle one of my old tanks. They've managed to not only endure, but thrive under my care. In fact, from the original six fish more than 100 fish have been derived, which I maintain in several aquariums.

The guppies in my heavily planted 10-gallon are still doing fine, but after I broke down the tank and removed the plants, several had trouble adjusting to the holding aquariums I've set up in the interim between taking down my old tanks and reestablishing my new ones. During the breakdown, I got a good look at areas I hadn't seen in a while, and I've decided I need to do a few things in the future to help my plants stay healthy.

Though I was trying to maintain this 10-gallon as a heavily planted setup, in the future I will create a layout with easier access points to facilitate pruning the harder-to-reach areas. Because several areas had been hiding from view in my old setup, excessive plant detritus had built up, and what I took out didn't really resemble what I had put in. No more stagnant growth areas for me.

In future blogs, I'm going to detail the process I'm going through with my new setups, the planning that goes into them and each step I take in reestablishing each setup. One tank will be another low-tech planted setup, and the other will eventually feature high-light, CO2 injection and more advanced plant layouts. Hopefully, I will learn just as much as my readers in the process.

If you've had any learning experiences when you've broken down an old tank, I would love to hear about them.

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