

The Road to an 80-Gallon Planted Tank

With all my ducks in a row, I'll be setting up my new planted aquarium and posting updates shortly.

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I finally have all of the equipment for my 80-gallon aquarium, minus the CO2 injection setup, which I'll be adding later when I add water after I start my plants emersed.

Everything else is ready, though. I'm still poking around my local fish stores for the right pieces of driftwood, but I can add them in over the next couple of weeks.

So, I plan to get started by prepping the setup and laying out the aquascape. I'm going to clean the aquarium one more time just to make sure the system starts out as stable as possible.

I'll include pictures of the setup as it progresses. I'm still playing around with layout details, so I haven't figured out how everything is going to look yet.

Buying Wood and Plants to Fit My Ideas

I'm finding that the hardest part of aquascaping is locating the right piece of driftwood or other parts of the hardscape for my setup. I plan to let rocks take a less prominent role in the aquarium, with some eventually being covered by dwarf baby tears or some other plant.

I'll keep some rocks out in the open, but the driftwood will be displayed prominently in the back of the aquarium. I'd like to eventually grow some moss on the driftwood, so that's a consideration too.

What do other plant keepers do to visualize their setups before buying components? I find that I can only get so much mileage out of imagining layouts or even drawing them out to give myself an idea of what my layout might end up looking like.

I've tried a few options when it comes to visualizing my setups. Obviously, being an editor on FAMA magazine, I get to look at beautiful planted tank pictures all day, so that definitely helps.

With regard to the difficulty in buying just the right piece of driftwood, the best method so far has been to buy striking pieces of driftwood without a specific use in mind. I also find I have an easier time selecting wood for smaller setups. Larger pieces seem to give me more trouble.

I'll be experimenting a lot with my layout over the next few days. I should have an update after this weekend. After I have the hardscape roughly in line with what I've envisioned in my head, I'll post pictures of various layouts I've tried.

I would love to get everyone's feedback about these pictures, so stay tuned.

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