

August 2009 FAMA Editor's Note

Reef Tank Tutorial

By Clay Jackson

I hope you like our special reef tank issue. As is often the case with such special issues, we try to gear most, if not all, of the features (often the columns too) around one unifying theme — in this case, planning for and setting up a small reef tank. And while we originally asked our writers to think and write in 100-gallon terms, their sage advice applies equally to larger systems.

I especially like Bob Fenner's feature "Recruiting Marines," which discusses the placement of livestock in small reef tanks. He offers tips on the correct way to introduce animals and provides lists of compatible animals. Fenner takes the unique approach of offering two biotope models for 100-gallon systems. Biotopes are kind of the "new wave" in aquariumkeeping. The biotope philosophy: keep the same fishes, invertebrates, corals, marine plants and even habitat types together as one would find them coexisting in the wild. First-time reefkeepers as well as old salts can learn something by reading this article.

Tank maintenance. Now there's a word pairing that doesn't exactly stir the soul. But it is still an important, if oftentimes neglected, topic that bears repeating. So many aquarium problems, from system crashes to disease breakouts, could be avoided with a moderate amount of diligence to good aquarium maintenance practices. That is why Tim Hayes' article "Maintenance Brushup" is a must-read for saltwater newbies and a good refresher for established aquarists. Really cool bonus alert: Premium Aquatics is sponsoring a downloadable PDF "Reef Tank Maintenance Schedule" that you can have for free. You can tape it to your tank, or tack it to the bulletin board in your fishroom in order to make sure you aren't overlooking any important maintenance steps.

If you are thinking of making the jump from the world of fresh water to a reef system, my hope is that this special reef tank issue will make the transition that much smoother for you. If you've been keeping reef tanks for years, perhaps you'll be inspired to try one of the biotope setups mentioned in Bob Fenner's article. Enjoy!

Midwest FragFest

I attended the Midwest FragFest, in Rockford, Illinois, April 25 and 26. It is always an eye-opening experience to see how popular the marine side of the hobby is in America's heartland. Midwesterners are busy fragging and growing corals, raising and breeding marine fishes and making positive contributions to the hobby. For more on FragFest, [click here](#).