ALGAL PROBLEMS?.....

The Fish Vet

Algae in your tank? It can turn your pristine aquascape into a horrible eye-sore in a matter of days. This is not the only problem. The real problem lies in the health of the fish. Some algae can produce toxins, but more frequently, they can cause your fish to suffocate when the lights go out. Algae consumes oxygen when it is not photosynthesising.

Algal overgrowth can be due to a variety of reasons. It could be from poor environmental conditions (too many fish in the tank, over feeding, infrequent water changes, excessive fertilizing) or wrong lighting (too much or of the wrong spectrum). Each sort of algae tells a different story on how they established themselves. And each sort of algae require different methods of eradication. It may be simple like changing water more frequently, using a suitable lighting type and period, decrease feeding or introducing more aquatic plants to altering the pH, water hardness, using anti-algal chemicals and installing a UV-clarifier. The combinations are enormous!

So, I will first outline the basic way of ridding the algae. However, if the problem persists, please consult Dr Richmond Loh at the Veterinary Clinic, as it may be an especially complex case.

1. Carry out very regular partial water changes (30%) every 14 days.
2. Reduce the stocking density of your aquarium.
3. Don't over-feed:

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A rule of thumb, fish's stomachs are approximately the size of their eye and so this is about as much as you should feed.

4. Use white daylight bulbs:
Light that peak at the blue and red spectrum are best for photosynthesis, but does not differentiate between algae and plant. By using plain white light, you are making it more difficult for the algae (and plants) to make their food.

5. Decrease photoperiod:
*Having light available for a shorter period will make it more difficult for algae to make their food and multiply.

6. If the tank receives sunlight, reposition the tank or shade it.
*Remember, it is dangerous to move a filled tank.

7. Add some water plants to your aquarium:
*Aquatic plants will compete with the algae for nutrients and light;

8. Introduce an algae eating fish that is suitable for your set-up:
*Examples would include: bristle nose catfish, chinese algae eater.

9. You may wish to install a UV-clarifier or proceed with chemical or other biological treatment.
*See the next fact sheet on "**How Algal Treatments Work**".
*Also, chemicals should never be the sole treatment. They should be used only after or in conjunction with management strategies as outlined.

If the problem persists, please consult Dr Richmond Loh.

For more detailed information contact **The Fish Vet**

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