

Fluval Sea Evo Starter

Useful accessories

- 2x 25 Litre water carriers (both filled with saltwater)
- Hydrometer
- Fluval Sea cp1 circulation pump
- Fluval Sea protein skimmer
- Thermometer
- Heater
- Sand
- Rocks
- Test kits Ammonia, Nitrite

Simple set up

Place the aquarium on a strong level surface and install the pumps and filter sponges that came with the tank. Then add the heater and protein skimmer along with any rocks and sand. Now it's time to add both 25 litre water carriers, check to make sure the water has spilled over the weir and flooded the filter chamber and switch everything on. After around 24 hours you should be happy that all the pumps and lights are working and that the water temperature is around 24°C to 25°C.

Now it's time to cycle the aquarium.

This can be done from 24 hours after switching everything on. Add a few small animals that don't need too much food and will only expel a small amount of waste Such as hermit crabs or shrimp. Let the tank run like this for around 2 to 3 weeks and keep an eye on the ammonia and nitrite using test kits.

The idea of the cycle process is to allow the beneficial bacteria that break down the chemical waste (ammonia) of the fish, time to multiply up to a level where they break down the waste as fast as it is being produced. These bacteria live in the filter, sand and rocks and prevent the aquarium inhabitants from poisoning themselves. It is not unusual to detect small amounts of ammonia first and then some nitrite. If any of these parameters raise to high levels a small water change could be performed. After you have gone from a clean tank to detecting ammonia and nitrite and then back to a clean tank with no ammonia or nitrite the tank is considered cycled, and a water change can be performed.

Once you are happy the aquarium has been fully cycled it is time to add some fish. This should be done slowly only adding one or two at a time and allowing a few weeks for the bacteria to catch up before the next fish are added as well as testing for ammonia and nitrite.

While the aquarium is cycling it is time to plan which fish you would like to keep. This is a very important part of the process and one that is often over looked. While there are lots of fish to choose from in aquatic stores. They cannot all live in your tank some will get too big; some will not get along and some may eat your corals if you are going to keep them. Also, the order that the fish are introduced is important for example a small damsel would be very well suited to a small to medium size aquarium. Being small, bold, colourful, and hardy they seem like the perfect first fish into an aquarium, but their territorial nature means that if they are the first fish in the tank, they will claim it all as their own and then bully any fish that are then introduced. When stocking a marine aquarium, the shy quite fish should be stocked first and the more boisterous and territorial the fish the later it should be added.

Salt Water

Unlike the goldfish or tropical fish that originate from freshwater lakes and rivers, the marine fish we keep originate from the warm tropical seas and oceans around the world and so need salt water to survive. The amount of salt is important, and we measure it in a scale called specific gravity using a Hydrometer or Refractometer, aim for a specific gravity around 1.025. This sea water can be made at home by mixing a marine aquarium salt mix with RO water and aerating for a few hours until dissolved. Or it can be brought pre mixed from store. The best way to do this is to buy two 25 litre water carriers (both filled with saltwater) at the same time as the aquarium and use them for the first fill of the tank. After that they can be refilled with 1 saltwater and 1 RO water. To help maintain the correct amount of salt in the aquarium it should be checked each week with the hydrometer if it is a little low more salt water should be added and if it's a little high more RO water should be added. It is important to remember that there will be some evaporation from the tank but only water will evaporate and not salt. So as the aquarium loses water from evaporation the salt concentration will increase so RO water should be added back to the original fill line to dilute it back to 1.025.

Maintaining the aquarium

Daily

1. Feed the fish usually twice a day using a small amount of good quality flake, small pellet, or frozen foods such as Brine shrimp, Mysis shrimp or Krill etc. Remember to only feed a small amount at a time as over feeding will increase the ammonia and could kill fish.
2. Top up any evaporated water with RO water
3. Empty and clean Protein skimmer cup if needed
4. Wipe algae from the aquarium glass if needed. (A algae magnet is good for this)

Weekly to monthly

1. Perform a water change, remove between 10 and 25% of water from the aquarium using a syphon hose or gravel cleaner sucking out as much dirt as you can from in between rocks and in the gravel. Then top back up using salt water.
2. Test water, Ammonia and Nitrite are especially important in new aquariums. Ph and Alkalinity are more likely to drop as the aquarium ages and the biological load increases. Maintaining a low level of Nitrate and Phosphate will help to combat algae. Large aquariums or aquariums with a lot of hard corals can suffer from low Magnesium and Calcium levels so may need supplements adding if they are testing low. However small aquariums with soft corals and regular water changes with a good salt mix will often maintain adequate levels.

