

# Algae

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## **What is Algae?**

Algae should be thought of as a type of simple plant that develops when water and light are present. It occurs in all colors from green to brown to red. Algae is not harmful to an aquarium but in most cases is considered unsightly and customers want to control or eliminate it.

## **What causes Algae to grow?**

For algae to grow it needs light and nutrients. Both the aquarium and room light can cause algae to grow. If your tank is getting more than 10 hours of light a day you may notice green algae starting to grow. Warm water and 'nitrates' (which build up from not doing regular water changes) will cause algae to grow quickly. Also if phosphates are present, they will promote algae growth.

## **How to control Algae:**

- 1) Control the light received by the aquarium. The less light your tank gets, the less likely it is you will have algae. We suggest no more than 8-10 hours of light during the day. Be sure to turn the light off at night. Most hoods can be plugged into a light timer that makes controlling the light very easy.
- 2) Regular water changes. Algae uses excess fish food and fish waste for fertilizer. By doing regular water changes you will reduce the amount of "food" the algae has.
- 3) Live plants fight Algae. A densely planted aquarium will have fewer algae problems.
- 4) Certain fish are "Algae Eaters" and will naturally help to control algae growth.

5) Many chemicals are available to keep algae from growing. These chemicals are "inhibitors" and will prevent some algae from starting to grow but will not get rid of algae after it has started.

6) Purchase a scraper or pad to remove algae from the sides of the aquarium. Don't use anything from a supermarket to clean your tank, as it may contain soap deadly to fish!

### **Algae blooms or green water problems**

An algae bloom is a suspended algae that makes the water green but does not grow on glass or ornaments. In some cases this appears overnight! If this happens to your tank the best way to get rid of it is by 'starving' the algae. Cover the tank with newspaper so it is completely dark for 48 hours (during this time only feed every other day). This will cause the algae to die. We sell a product called "Velvet Guard" which works wonders on this condition as well. After 48 hours, do a 1/3-water change. If it is still a bit green or cloudy you can use a water clarifier such as "Acurel-F". In some cases the water change may have to be repeated. Ask us for specifics.

This information is brought to you by the Pet Professionals at:

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