

HOW TO MANAGE A MULTI-TANK FISHROOM COMFORTABLY

Written by Anita Hovanesian, BAS Pub in The Daphnian Oct 1990
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Aquarists who have a couple of tanks do not really have a serious problem with proper maintenance, but when the number of tanks goes beyond 10 or so, then problems arise. Trying to do water changes with a bucket becomes very taxing and perhaps even physically dangerous. Cross-contamination can also become a problem. I have devised several ways to do maintenance, and would like to share them with you.

My fish room is located in the basement, and my nearest sink is up 2 small flights of stairs. I soon learned that using the conventional bucket method was impossible. The Python method would have been ideal except that if the sink overflowed; I would never know it until the water seeped down through the ceiling. I had to devise my own method. The plumber was called and I had him install 2 faucets (hot and Cold) in my fish room. A "Y" piece (commonly used for washing machines) was placed between them allowing me to mix my own water temperature. I then hooked up a 25 foot garden hose to the "Y" and this gave me lots of mobility with my water source. Now, I had to figure out what to do with my waste water.

I took my 5 gallon bucket and in it placed a pump which does about 650 GPH. This pump was hooked up to a garden hose and the other end of the hose was placed into the washing machine waste-water elbow located on my sewer pipe. With this setup I was able to go from tank to tank and syphon off as much as I wished. Each tank had its own 4 foot syphon hose (cut up garden hose) and a strainer on the other end to keep fish from getting sucked up or injured. This method also prevented cross-contamination between tanks.

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As the number of tanks grew, so did my electrical problems. One day I noticed that my extension cord was quite warm. I followed it to the wall electrical source and found that the plate around the plug socket was literally HOT!!! The electrician was promptly summoned and I had him install plug molding all the way around the fish room about: 1 foot higher than all of the tanks. This gave me plugs 6 inches apart all around the room and the system had its own circuit breaker. In case of trouble, the whole room could be shut off by one switch. I was now able to plug in my bucket/pump setup anywhere with great convenience.

My two 130 gal tanks took the longest time to change. I got a small table and placed it between them. On the table I put a 10 gallon wash bucket (the square type) and in the bucket another water pump connected to garden hose was placed. The hose again was hooked up to the sewer system. Now, I had a sink - all I had to do was plug in the pump. I allowed a syphon hose to continuously drain into this makeshift sink, and filled the tank simultaneously via my water source. If I timed everything correctly, the water came in at about the same speed as the syphon evacuated it. I could leave the tank for about 15-20 minutes - assured that it would partial itself without my being present. This was a lifesaver! This method, of course, could only be used for very large fish as small ones could be injured by the water coming in to fast.

I'm sure that other hobbyists have devised different methods to make maintenance easier, by my method really works quite well for the type of fish that I keep. Due to their size, it is necessary to change water every 3 days or so and now I don't mind doing it at all!