



Axolotls

Setting up your aquarium

Axolotls are great fun to keep and look after but they do have some requirements. Here is a basic list of needs to set up an appropriate environment.

- Aquarium size should start around 40 litres per axolotl.
- Filtration can be any type suitable for the tank size/stock level, flow rates should be gentle
- Lighting – not necessary but can be used, if bright provide shade for the axolotl
- Heaters – not necessary
- Substrate – none. Sand & gravel are likely to be ingested causing blockages or interfering with appetite. Artificial grass is popular but floats so will need to be held down.
- It is a good idea to provide some suitable cover/caves for your axolotl's comfort.
- Avoid any sharp objects in the aquarium as the axolotl may damage themselves.
- Axolotls should not be kept with any other fish as they may eat them or have their gill filaments damaged by picking.

Preparing to introduce your axolotl

After setting up, the aquarium (more specifically the filter) needs to go through a process known as the '**NITROGEN CYCLE**'. Specific stages in this process can cause harm to the axolotl –the ammonia & nitrite can burn their skin & gills if they get to dangerous levels. There are ways to combat this, but in our opinion, it is best to complete this cycle with some goldfish. Once the cycle is completed (typically around 4-6weeks) bring the goldfish back & put the axolotl in the now safe aquarium.



Please refer to our new tank setup sheet available in store or on our website for detailed information on the nitrogen cycle. If possible, we suggest you bring a water sample to the store on a weekly basis for free testing during this cycle & we will be happy to guide you through this process to ensure the axolotl is introduced safely.

Caring for your axolotl

Once the axolotl is in the aquarium give them a little bit of time to discover their new home, wait about an hour & give them some of their food. The feeding schedule for axolotls is once every 2 days in winter & once every 3 days in summer (just a guideline, time & observation will let you know the best approach).

Most axolotls we sell have been raised on carnivore tablets & will feed like most fish. You can also use fresh foods such as earthworms, whitebait, liver, lean heart, strips of squid, prawn tails etc. Avoid live feeder fish as they can pick at the gills of the axolotls which can be fatal.

We recommend a regular water change routine, usually on a weekly for fortnightly basis depending on tank size & stock levels. This is usually 10 – 30%. Always ensure you use a water conditioner when using tap water. Over time we can test your water & let you know if the routine needs adjusting.

Axolotls are a cool water animal & lot of information about them indicates a need to keep them in very low temperatures. This is not really as important in Australia as our local stocks have been bred & kept successfully in local conditions for over 40 years. We find they are comfortable up to around 26 deg, watch them at temps above this & if needed use a fan on the surface of the water to create some evaporative cooling. A chiller is not needed unless in a shed or other very hot situation (if in the home, better to buy yourself an air conditioner than a chiller & cool the room to a comfortable temp for all). Do not ever place any aquarium by a window where sunlight can hit it.

We are usually able to get a wide range of colours including black, albino, gold & leucistic.