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## Betta Siamese Fighting Fish

*Betta splendens*



### Necessities:

- Small, shallow bowl (1-3 gallons)
- Splendid Betta® Complete Water Conditioner
- Live Plant (Apon bulb or Banana plant)
- Food
- Gravel
- Net

### Extras:

- Low power Filter/air bubbler
- Light
- Decorations
- Bettafix®

### General:

Bettas are a very interesting and colorful fish native to the mud puddles and rice paddies of Thailand. The male is more brightly colored and has longer fins than the female and is very territorial, so keep only one fish to a bowl or they will live up to the name “fighting fish”. Because they are a labyrinth fish they have a set of gills and a set of lungs and can be kept in a small bowl. Male Bettas blow bubble nests for the female’s eggs and will do this even when alone. Even when spawning, the female only visits the male long enough for him to fertilize and place the eggs in the bubble nest. Then she leaves and he cares for the eggs until they hatch. If you wish to see him spar an opponent for a few minutes you can put a mirror up to the bowl, but only for a few minutes a day or he may become overly stressed. Bettas can live 1-4 years although they are considered to be a seasonal fish in their native habitat.

### Handling:

Obviously you don’t! Unfortunately they do not respond well to children sticking their hands in the bowl. Small children will need to be educated on this.

### Housing:

Bettas, unlike goldfish and most other fish, can be housed happily in small bowls and tanks. In fact, they do not like to be in large tanks as they are not strong swimmers. They find it very difficult to swim to the surface for oxygen.

1. Rinse the bowl with lukewarm water. NEVER use soaps or cleansers on the bowl or any accessories. Rinse the gravel in the same manner as the bowl.
2. Fill the bowl with room-temperature tap water. Room-temperature water is usually 5 degrees lower than the air temperature of the room. If in doubt, let the water stand for an hour before putting it in the bowl.
3. Add Splendid Betta® Complete Water Conditioner to the water, following the instructions on the package. Dechlorinator is a must. Not all chlorine evaporates by letting the water stand. We recommend using tap water instead of distilled or bottled as they are not of the appropriate hardness or PH.
4. Float the fish in the bag in the bowl for at least 5 minutes. Temperature changes are very harmful. Add the fish and plant(s) gently.
5. Place the bowl away from direct sunlight in a warm room during wintertime and a cool room during summertime. Do not place the bowl by a vent or heat source as temperatures in these areas tend to vary greatly from one hour to the next.
6. The bowl should be cleaned at least once a week, following the same instructions. If the bowl should become cloudy in only a couple of days it generally means the fish is being overfed and the bowl should be cleaned and feedings should be cut back.

### Diet:

Overfeeding is the common reason for all types of fish to fail to thrive. Fish food that is uneaten collects in the tank and rots causing very harmful bacteria to thrive. The smaller the bowl, the more serious the problem. HINT: To make feeding easier for very young children, use a 7-day pill container with appropriate amounts in each compartment. Bettas thrive on a varied diet. In addition to their regular food, they should be offered brine shrimp, krill, bloodworms and small insects like crickets. Remember to remove any uneaten food!

### Heating:

Bettas prefer their water at 70-76 degrees. Very low or high sudden temperature changes can cause them to develop health issues. We recommend keeping Bettafix® on hand. During the wintertime it maybe necessary to add a small bowl heater.

### Lighting:

Special lighting is not required, but your fish should have a good day/night cycle to promote good eating and activity.