

## NOTES ON MAINTAINING AXOLOTLS IN AQUARIA

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Our adult animals and many of our younger animals are housed in standard 10 gallon aquaria. The water used is 50% modified Holtfreter's solution or tap water that has been treated with a water conditioner. A 10 gallon aquarium can hold a maximum of 3 adults, 6 juveniles, or 15 young. The minimum amount of water needed is 6 liters per adult, 3 juveniles, or 5 young.

Each aquarium is outfitted with a small corner filter that is cleaned weekly. Aeration is achieved by a Silent Giant aquarium pump serving no more than 4 filters. The bottom of each aquarium is covered with 5 pounds of aquarium gravel.

Algae is allowed to cover the walls of our aquaria. In fact, we encourage its growth by illumination and seeding because aquaria with a healthy growth of algae rarely need cleaning. Some of our aquaria with such algal growths have not been cleaned in years and their water is crystal clear. Apparently, a balance between the animals and the algae has been achieved.

Since the pH of an aquarium can change quite rapidly (usually to a lethal acidic value) we check the pH of each aquarium two times per week using the indicator dye bromthymol blue. We try to maintain a pH near neutrality.

We feed our animals liver of a firm consistency. Soft consistency liver will rapidly foul an aquarium if regurgitated.

In the Spring 1979 issue of the Axolotl Newsletter we reported on a 45 day observation of 13 breeding pairs of axolotls kept in aquaria. We have repeated this observation using different animals with equal success. We feel this method of breeding axolotls has merit in screening for animals that will breed.

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