



THE FILTER



Hyphessobrycon amandae

Ember Tetra

August 2018
Volume 28 Issue 1

TBAS . . . Since 1992

Photo Mike Jacobs . . . 2018



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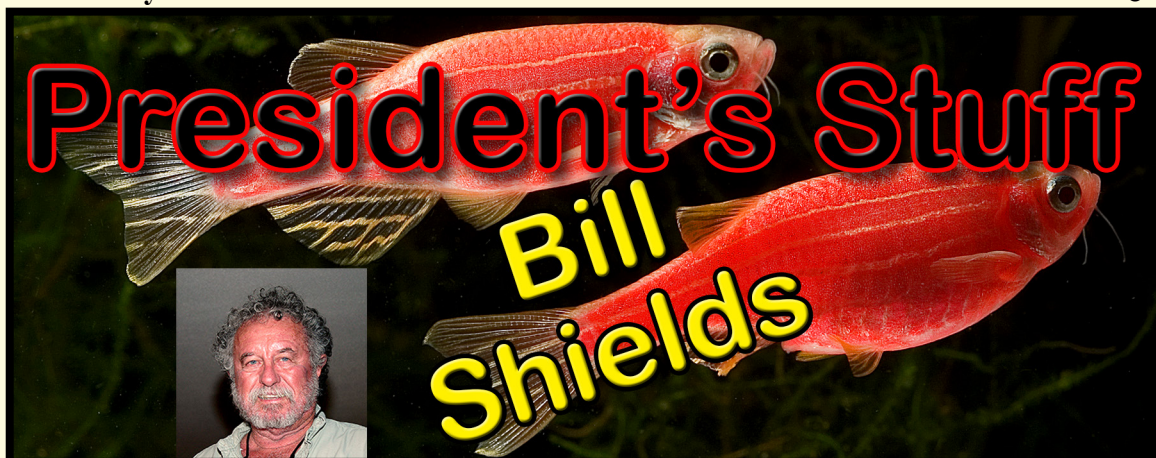
"THE FILTER"

Tampa/St. Pete, Florida

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If you did not make it to the July 15th – The Friends of the Florida Fancy Guppy Association’s Annual BBQ/Guppy Show/All species Auction, you missed a great day of fish, friends and a super lunch. Thank you to Coach Richard and Mary Jo for opening their house to this event. You can check it out on the Friends of the Florida Fancy Guppy Association page to see what you missed.

On a sad note our friend, Father Fish – Lou Foxwell had a fall at the Venice club meeting Thursday night. He broke his femur and had to have surgery. Hoping he will have a speedy recovery.

The Annual Auction on November 17th is now posted on our fb events page. Our show chair, Patty Moncrief, will be asking for volunteers as the date approaches so volunteer to help. It should be another great day with lots of fish. Make sure to check out the rules to make things run smoothly. Please ask questions if there is something you do not understand.

Ludo Van Den Boert is the chair of the nominations/election committee. He will be taking nominations by email until the August 6th BOD meeting. Nominee has to be in good standing and agree to being nominated. Ludo still needs two volunteers, not running for BOD, to assist in the voting.

Best Fishes,

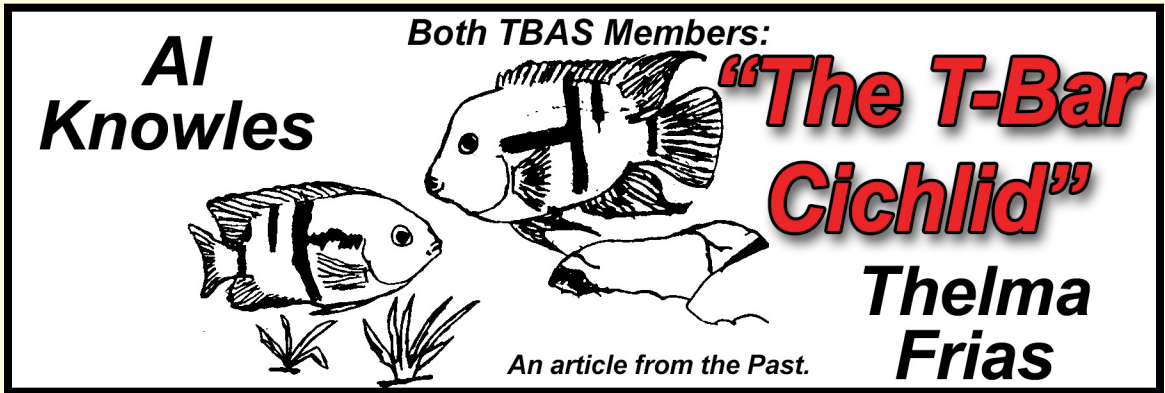
Bill

Bill Shields, President, TBAS



Hypoptopoma gulare
Giant Otocinclus
Photo by Mike Jacobs 2018

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It was that time of the evening when things settle down at my house. Dinner had been eaten, the dishes were cleaned, and the mess made by my youngest child had been cleaned up. The girls' baths were completed and my clothes had begun to dry from the water battle I had lost. As I laid across my bed enjoying the peace and quiet the telephone rang. My first thought was, "Oh no, not another telemarketing person trying to sell me something I don't need." I answered the telephone and all I heard was the lady screaming, "I've got babies, I've got babies!" My initial reaction was to scream back, "they're not mine lady, they're not mine! And I've never seen you before in my life. You've got the wrong number." Then I recognized the voice as TBAS member, Thelma Frias. She was letting me know she had spawned *Cryptoheros sajica*. Thelma knew I had been working with this fish for some time, and that she had beaten me to the punch. She had obtained a pair several months earlier at the tour of Don Conkels' Tropicals. I congratulated her on the achievement and asked for the details. I was both surprised and elated with her high level of excitement. It reminded me of why each of us participate in the hobby.

Cryptoheros sajica was described in 1974 by Bussing (Sands). Until recently this fish was known as *Cichlasoma Sajica*. The name Sajica is an acronym for Salvador Jimenez Canossa, then director of the Library of Congress of Costa Rica. In the trade this fish is sometimes known as Sajie's Cichlid and T-bar Cichlid. It inhabits small streams and lakes on the lower half of the Pacific side of Costa Rica, from Rio Parrita to the Rio Coloradito, at elevations of up to 2,000 feet (Conkel).

Males can be identified by their extended dorsal and anal fins. The characteristic T-bar marking, formed by a vertical bar extending from the mid-dorsal area to the vent, and a horizontal bar extending from the top of the gill cover to the vertical bar (Sands) is diagnostic for this species. Males can grow up to 5 inches, with females being slightly smaller with shorter and rounded dorsal and anal fins.



The photographer is Vinny Kutty, an old TBAS member. We still wish he would come to visit from the West Coast.

Sajica occur in several different color variations (Konings). Common to all variations are the reddish speckling in the male's unpaired fins and varying degrees of blue in the body on a beige background. The females usually show a golden color at the base of the dorsal and anal fins. Their body color is usually beige to light purple, with several dark vertical bands. When spawning and caring for fry, both sexes take on a dark purple coloration from their face to mid-body. The iris of the eyes seems to enlarge and become

a brilliant gold. For a fish of their size, they defend their eggs and fry viciously, and have been known to attack their owner's hand when placed in the tank (Elias)

Sajica is an easy fish to feed, accepting most prepared and live foods small enough to be ingested. A pH between 7 and 8, with a medium hardness, is recommended. Plants are usually not bothered, with digging occurring only during spawning preparation.

After talking to Thelma I went to my fish room and talked to my Sajicas, telling them how lazy they were and how good Thelma's fish were doing with their new family of fry. They either got tired of my preaching, or felt sorry for me, because I was soon rewarded with a small clutch of eggs attached to a piece of driftwood.

What follows is a tale of two hobbyists, both fascinated by the same species of fish. Hopefully our experiences will benefit others.

Thelma's pair lived in a bare-bottom ten gallon tank with a screen top and no light. The temperature was approximately 77 degrees Fahrenheit, with moderately hard water and a pH of 7.4. The tank was filtered by one "dirt magnet type" sponge filter. The only decoration was a small piece of driftwood. Their diet varied, consisting of freeze-dried bloodworms, frozen adult brine shrimp, Wardley's Total Tropical Flake, Saga Discus Crumbles and freeze-dried daphnia.

After introducing the pair into the tank, the male became so aggressive he had to be removed to a "holding net" attached to the upper portion of the same tank ... and told to BEHAVE. Here he remained for two weeks. In the mean time, it was suggested a clay pot with an enlarged drain hole be added to the tank to give the female a sanctuary from the males' aggression. After he settled down, the male was reintroduced to the tank with his mate. About this time Thelma left for vacation for six days. Before leaving, she covered the tank with a towel to give the pair some seclusion from the traffic in her home.

Upon her return, Thelma was greeted by, what appeared to be, one hundred brown eggs attached to the inside of the clay pot, with the female standing guard. Approximately six days later, the eggs hatched. Two days after hatching, the fry were free-swimming. This is about the time I received the famous telephone call. Little did I know Thelma had also called four other TBAS members that night with the good news.

Thelma fed the fry baby brine shrimp and powdered artificial daphnia. This diet was continued for the next several weeks, and only evaporated water was replaced in the tank. In approximately six weeks, the fry had reached 1/2 an inch in length. Progress continued until one day Thelma discovered six dead fry. As the days progressed she noticed less and less fry, but no dead bodies. Soon she was down to approximately one dozen fry, then only two. A few days after this Thelma discovered the female dead. Thelma came to the conclusion that the male was the culprit.

She went through the normal depression and anger associated with such a loss, but was persuaded to try again. She has since obtained another female, and started over.

I selected a fifteen gallon aquarium with a bare bottom for my breeding project. The aquarium is filtered by two Hydro-Sponge II's. Decorations consist of one small piece of driftwood and enough Java moss to cover one fourth of the aquarium. The aquarium's occupants are: two Australian Rainbowfish, one Kerri Tetra, one Glowlite Tetra and one pair of German Blue Rams. At first glance you might consider this tank to be over-crowded, and... IT IS] Even with two filters, I continue to encounter problems maintaining a stable pH. The fish are fed a quality flake food, baby brine shrimp, Tetra Bits and the Sajica get chopped earthworms.

My dominant male Sajica took his time selecting a mate. After exhibiting aggression toward all the other fish, he finally paired with the largest female. The other fish continue to act as "target fish" and assisted in cementing the pair bond. The other two Sajicas were banished to an area behind the sponge filters or deep within the Java moss. The rainbows were too fast for the Saricas and were soon ignored. The Tetras learned quickly to keep their distance. The first thing I noticed the evening I discovered the spawn was the color change in the pair. They took on the breeding coloration mentioned earlier. The female was very active, hovering over the driftwood and chasing the other fish, including the male. She chose the far side of the driftwood, under an over-hang, as the location to deposit her eggs. There were approximately thirty beige-colored eggs attached to the wood in a loose circle. After they hatched, she moved them to a crevice in the driftwood and continued her watch around the clock. I left the light on to assist her. The water temperature was approximately 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and

the fry became free-swimming about three days after hatching. At this point the male was allowed closer and the pair banished all other fish to the back upper corners of the aquarium. This is when the female Ram was killed. I decided to remove the fry to assure some of the other fish survived, and to reduce the aggression of the proud parents.

The fry grew quickly on their diet of baby brine shrimp, and the twenty seven fry that survived are currently 3/4 of an inch in length. I've also decided to work with this fish more closely. I've been able to obtain what seems to be several different color variations, one from as far away as the Netherlands (thanks Jaap).

In closing, Thelma and I would like to recommend Sajica to those hobbyists who may be looking for a small sized cichlid that displays all the attributes of its larger cousins. I would not recommend keeping the following species with Sajica because they will cross-breed. These include: Archocentrus Nigrofasciatus (Convict), Septemfasciatus and Spilurus. Also, I would like to thank my co-author for her input, and look forward to working with her again, my interviews with Thelma were always a delight... PEACE!!!

References:

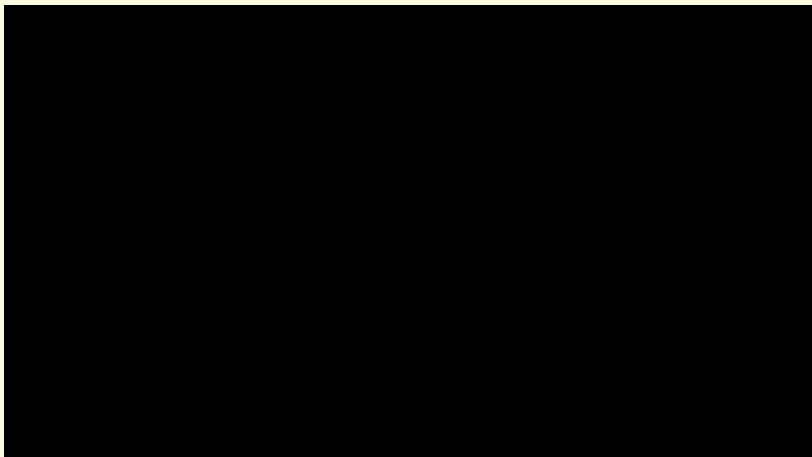
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T-Bar Cichlid Video - not by Al or Thelma

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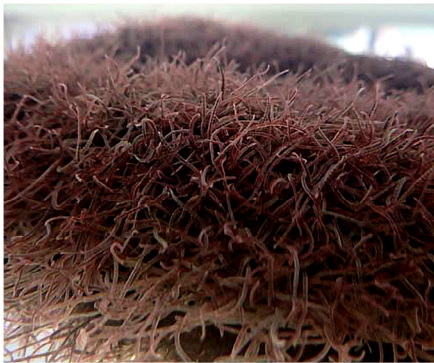


MEMBERSHIP DUES!!!!



Membership Dues for TBAS are due on the anniversary of your sign-up date every year. Please make sure you check the “sign-in” list on the table at every meeting to check your “Dues-Date” . . . Thanks!!!

USE PAYPAL ON THE TBAS WEBSITE . . . TBAS1.COM . . . !!!!!



BLACK WORMS the REAL STORY

by Mike Jacobs

I have been handling and feeding blackworms to tropical fish since about 1968. I was a young kid working at a fish store while going to Purdue University and we had been selling the red tubifex worm to the hobbyist for 1-2 years. . .and then all of a sudden there were these “monsters”. The black worm is not a black “red tubifex worm”. It is simply another type of worm that someone thought would be of some use in the hobby. Boy, talk about an understatement.

The old red tubifex worm tended to spoil easily and really make a mess in the tank and the container in which they were kept. The black worms seemed not to be this tremendous mess so they were an instant success. Black worms are about twice as big as the tubifex worm but after a while you don't seem to notice the difference and most people became less squeemish very quickly.

The discussion of the possibility of disease will be saved for a later article. Let it suffice for the moment that I have used them for some 30 years and can count on 2-3 fingers the number of fish I think I lost to these worms. So let's find out how I treat them before I feed them to the fish.

I get the worms from the fish store in a bag . . . generally about a fist full but get what ever amount you wish. Put them in a long, low, flat container (see the picture). . .and rinse the be-goobers out of them. The first day I'll rinse them 5-6-7 times until the water coming off them is perfectly clear. I then put the container in the refrigerator and clean them the next day. I rinse them 4-5 times each time I get them out to clean them. I run the sprayer over them so that they “boil” in the stream of water. When the container is full of water I set it down until the worms all go to the bottom and then I pour the water out of the container. I do this every day for at least 4-5-6 days until the water at the first of the cleaning is as clear as the last water I rinse them in . . .it will happen. I usually have one container I am feeding from and one container I am cleaning. I have had good clean black worms last up to a month without feeding them...until I fed them all to the fish . . . they seemed perfectly clean and healthy the whole time.

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Breeding: This is a reprinted article from the South Carolina Biological Supply House

“California blackworms can be cultured and easily maintained in a small aquarium or deep pan filled with 23 inches of spring water (or aged tap water). At room temperature in the laboratory, populations double in about 34 weeks or less. Using a disposable plastic pipette, transfer a few dozen, undamaged, healthy worms into the aquarium. Never attempt to handle or transfer worms with forceps or hooks. They are easily injured by these instruments. Next, add enough strips of brown paper towel to just cover the bottom of the container. The towel serves as a fibrous substrate of decomposing material, both for the worms and for numerous microscopic organisms that may cohabit the culture, such as bacteria, protozoans, rotifers, and ostracods.

Add sinking fish-food pellets as the primary food source for this simple aquatic ecosystem. Start by adding one or two pellets. After a few days, add one or two more, but only if the others have been consumed. Do not overfeed, since decomposition of uneaten food may contaminate the aquarium and cause a mass die-off of worms. Worms are not harmed, however, by irregular feeding or long periods of starvation.

Replace water lost to evaporation by adding spring water (or distilled water). I recommend continuous, gentle aeration, and this becomes increasingly important as biological decomposition of the paper occurs and as the worm population increases.

As the paper towel disintegrates and waste residues accumulate, replace the culture water regularly (about every two weeks) by slowly decanting it down a drain. Be careful not to lose remaining paper and worms at the bottom. After rinsing the paper and worms again with spring water, and decanting, refill the aquarium to the original level and add new pieces of towel. I suggest the occasional “harvesting” of surplus worms; these can be used for classroom experiments, as live food for fish, or for starting duplicate cultures. I strongly advise the maintenance of at least one duplicate culture. If you follow these procedures, the worms reproduce continuously by asexual reproduction (fragmentation), and cultures may be sustained for years.”



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Did you ever acquire a loach only to watch it slowly die, even with live food? Well, there is a little trick that I learned that may help. Whenever a new loach comes in the first food I give it is banana. Yes, banana. This amazing fruit has cut my losses by 98%. Most loaches are caught wild and the stress of shipping can be too much for them. Even when they seem to be eating they just seem to waste away. Many fish from the Amazon basin eat fruit that falls into the water. Bananas and plantains come from the same region so these are a natural food source. I am not sure why this works so well, but I think that it stabilizes their digestive tracts much like it does for young children with diarrhea.

Many people feed their fish peas, romaine lettuce and zucchini, but there are other fruits and vegetables that can and should be used. Don't feed more small pieces of banana than the fish can eat in a short time or the water will get cloudy. Apples, thinly sliced with the skin removed (this will remove pesticides) are sweet and provide good roughage. Blueberries, when they are in season, are greedily taken by fish that can swallow them whole. I slice them in half for smaller fish and loaches. The flower buds of broccoli can be cut off in small or large chunks, depending on the size of

your fish. Cooked carrots in small chunks can be fed or buy the package of frozen peas and carrots and let a few thaw out. Dry oatmeal has been used for years by goldfish breeders and is very good for most fish. Ripe papaya is a good natural food too, but will also cloud the tank if over fed (it is higher in beta-carotene than almost any other fruit). Thin slices of pumpkin, yellow squash, acorn squash or any other squash are a great treat. If you prefer the pieces to sink try freezing them first.

I also use a "weed" called purslane. It grows every where in Florida and is high in B-complex vitamins. The leaves are small so most fish can eat it with ease. This brings me to herbs. Some of these are fine, but others I have not tried so use with caution. Be sure to use only fresh herbs. Parsley is one of the best and many grazing fish love it (it's not just for decoration anymore).

I once had a hysterical mother call me. Her son had just fed their fish black pepper and she wanted to know if the fish would be OK. They showed no adverse affects, but I'm not sure if black pepper has any nutritional value.

Citrus and strawberries are too high in acid and may effect the pH in smaller tanks. Also, never use iceberg lettuce; it's not much good for anything. Keep in mind the effects on water quality that any fruit or vegetable might cause before trying it on your fish.

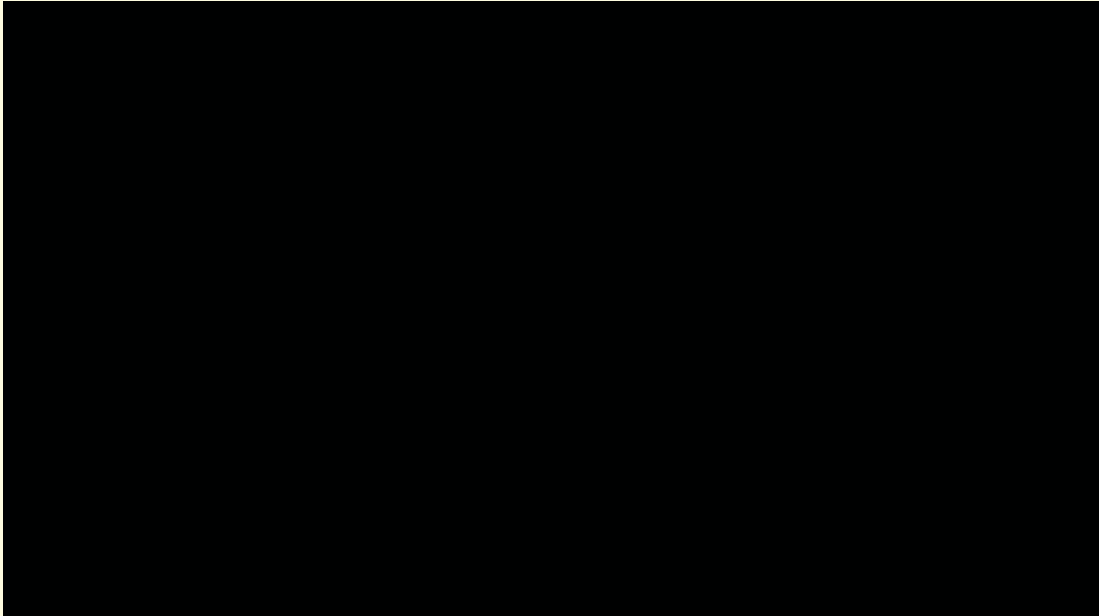
I hope this makes you look at fruits and vegetable differently. Don't think that just because you don't have vegetarian fish you can't use these. I have seen small barbs devour a piece of banana like it was candy to them. Even rainbows nibble on plants a little and Corydoras cats will eat zucchini and bananas. So give your fish a treat that is a great source of vitamins and minerals and roughage too. Until next month keep those fish happy and well fed.

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www.aquaresearchcenter.com

by Joe Gargas

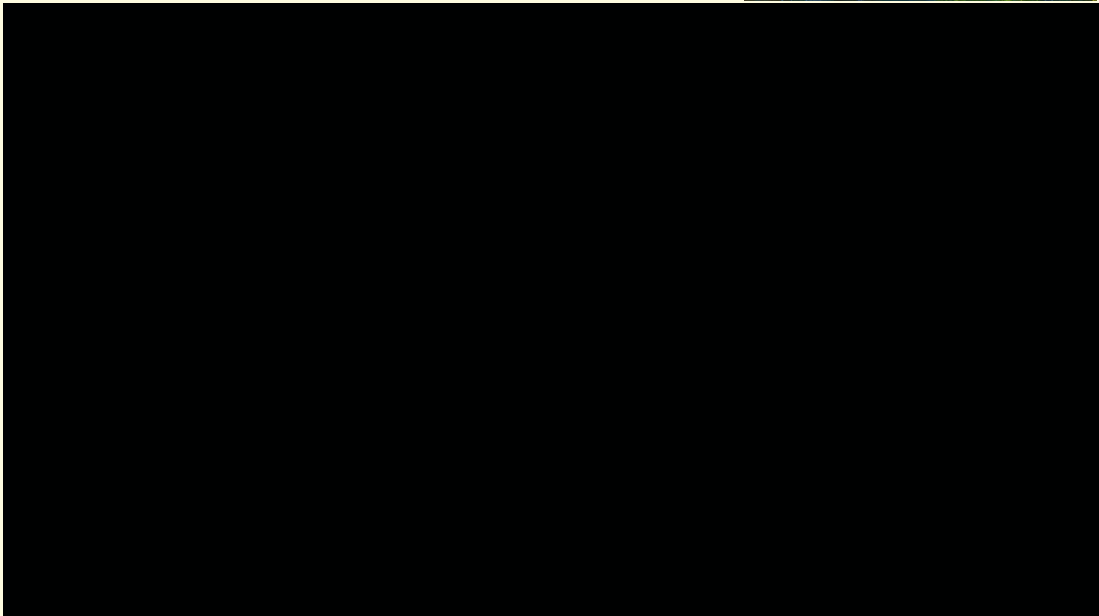
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Lemon Drop Pleco . . . *Ancistrus* sp. Lemon Drop

photo: Mike Jacobs 2017

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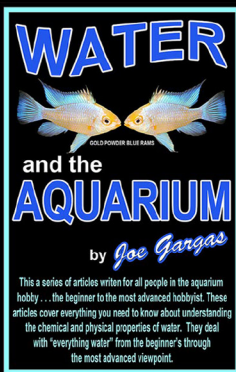


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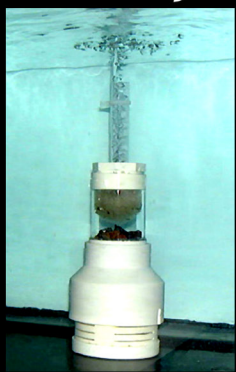


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