

## Welcome to Your Live Animal Materials

In this guide you will find the materials and information needed to prepare and care for your betta fish.

## SKK.3 Relationships in an Ecosystem

**Anchoring Phenomena:**  
Relationships in an Ecosystem

**Driving Question:**  
What is an ecosystem?

## Science Center Support Materials

### Bag Z

- 1 plastic fork
- 1 small vial/bottle betta fish food
- 1 – 16oz jar of aquarium gravel
- 1 small vial dechlorinator

### Loose Items

- 1 small Kritter Keeper

### Vendor Provided

- 1 male Betta Fish
- Aquatic snails
- Elodea plant
- 1 vial fish food

## Betta Fish Care Guide

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Your live materials will be priority shipped and require immediate opening upon arrival. It is important that you prepare habitats for their arrival accordingly, as leaving them in their shipping packaging for too long could lead to increased stress for the animals.

Every effort is made to ensure the safe arrival of your betta fish. However, if upon receiving your shipment your betta fish is clearly ill or dead; please notify us so that we can send a replacement ([sciencecenter@oneida-boces.org](mailto:sciencecenter@oneida-boces.org)). Unfortunately, our new vendor will require proof of the deceased animal, so please provide a picture with your email.

### Preparing for Arrival

After you have ordered your live material, you will receive a box labeled Grade K Betta Fish Support Materials, from the Science Center. The box will contain everything needed to support your live material in terms of housing. **All water used for the betta fish habitats should be dechlorinated and around room temperature.**



The simplest way to achieve this is to prepare water with the dechlorinator (using the directions on the bottle) or by letting the water sit for up to a day before using it in betta fish habitats.

1. Rinse out the betta keeper and gravel.
2. Place around 3 pieces of elodea plant in the tank for the betta fish and snails (hook the elodea around the tongs of a fork and bury the fork beneath the stones).
3. Fill the betta keeper with water. Add about 3 drops of the dechlorinator to the water 24 hours prior to arrival of the betta fish to be sure the water will be dechlorinated and is at room temperature.
4. **Optional:** Use decorations with smooth, non-sharp edges to protect the betta's delicate fins. Live plants are best for enrichment, but silk plants are a safe alternative to avoid fin damage. Provide places for the betta to hide and feel secure, such as plants or caves, which are essential for their well-being.

**Please note:** *Betta fish are aggressive towards their own species and should be housed alone in their aquarium.*

### Arrival Day

Your betta fish and snails will arrive safely packed in a sealed, but breathable, container. Upon arrival do not delay in removing them from their shipping containers and placing them into their new habitat.



Allow your betta fish to adjust to their new habitat in a quiet space. It is important that **no one taps on the betta fish tank.** This causes the betta fish distress.

### Feeding

Feed your betta 2-3 pellets of betta food twice daily. The snails will eat the elodea and any algae that appears on the tank. **Once you have used the food provided, please visit your local pet store to replenish your supply.**



### Holiday Feeding and Care

While leaving the betta fish in school over the two-day weekend is perfectly fine, **if school is closed for an extended period of time, the betta fish should be brought home with the teacher or a student volunteer.**

## Maintenance of Habitat

Change water and clean regularly. Replace old water with **room temperature, dechlorinated** water.

## Removal from Classroom

Teachers are free to keep the betta fish. **Teachers who wish to keep their betta fish will be responsible for providing food and anything else needed to house/care for the animal.** While the Kritter Keeper and set up instructions provided are an adequate habitat for the duration of the science kit, **betta fish do better in a larger tank.** Here are some things to keep in mind for a teacher or student who wish to keep the betta fish.

- **Tank Size & Type:** A 5-gallon aquarium is the ideal starting size for a single betta fish, allowing for normal swimming and exploration. A tight-fitting lid is essential to prevent betta fish from jumping out of the tank. Place the tank in a location away from direct sunlight, drafts, and busy areas that might stress the fish.
- **Water Parameters:** Maintain a pH level between 6.8 and 7.5 for optimal health. A low-flow filter is necessary to remove toxins and keep the water clean. Maintain a stable water temperature between 76-85°F, as bettas are tropical fish. Regular water changes are necessary to maintain water quality and remove waste.
- **Decorations:** Use decorations with smooth, non-sharp edges to protect the betta's delicate fins. Live plants are best for enrichment, but silk plants are a safe alternative to avoid fin damage. Add a substrate like smooth sand, small river rocks, or glass marbles to provide a natural feel and beneficial bacteria, though a bare-bottomed tank is also an option.
- **Hiding Spots:** Provide places for the betta to hide and feel secure, such as plants or caves, which are essential for their well-being.
- **Single Occupancy:** **Betta fish are aggressive towards their own species and should be housed alone in their aquarium.**

At some point you may want to say goodbye to your classroom pet. There are a number of ways to safely remove them from your classroom:

1. **Sending your classroom pet home with a student(s) is possible only with parent agreement and an understanding of how to appropriately care for the animal. Please confirm with parent. Student is responsible for providing a home, food and anything else needed to house/care for the animal.**
2. Contact your middle and high school science teachers to see if they have any interest in housing the animal.
3. Contact a local pet store to see if they will accept your animal.
4. If you are part of OHM BOCES and our couriers go to your school, please email the Science Center at [sciencecenter@oneida-boces.org](mailto:sciencecenter@oneida-boces.org) to arrange a live animal pick-up.