

Microworm Basics

Microworms are a small white non-parasitic nematode worm, used to feed baby fish (fry) as well as small adult fish (such as Neon Tetras and Blue Eyed Rainbow Fish). Microworms are often confused with white worms which are similar but significantly larger. Both worm varieties are easy to culture for home aquarium use but due to their small size, microworms can be consumed by even the smallest of fry. Although not as nutritious as brine shrimp, microworm cultures are self sustaining and therefore make an excellent standby for that unexpected batch of fry.

Checklist

- Plastic tub (about 2 litres in volume) and lid (with small air holes)
- Rolled oats or cereal-based product
- Dried yeast
- Starter culture
- Heat mat

Step 1

Make a moist 'porridge' mixture using oats (or similar) and water. Boil or microwave mixture. Do not make the mixture too wet as microworm cultures can easily drown in a small amount of water.

Step 2

Allow the mixture to cool and spread it evenly across bottom of tub to a depth of 1-2cm (microworms will only live on the surface of the mixture where they can readily breath). Spread starter culture evenly over the top of the mixture. To speed up the culture, lightly sprinkle yeast over the top. Keep the culture at a constant temperature of 20-25°C. Any cooler and production will slow down or stop, hotter and the culture will dry out and be destroyed.

Maintenance

Sprinkle yeast over the culture once a week. The worms will need to be subcultured every 4-6 weeks, (using the above method) or when it develops a 'vinegar' smell. In order to ensure a constant supply of microworms a second culture can be started after the first one is established.

Harvesting

The worms should be ready to harvest in 2-7 days. Depending on how well stocked the culture is, either of two collection methods can be used;

1. When culture is well stocked, simply run your finger or an icy pole stick around the edge of the container.
2. When culture is less densely stocked, place icy pole sticks on the surface of the culture and leave for a couple of hours.

Feeding

The collection spatula can be dipped directly into the feeding tank. Alternately, microworms can be washed off the spatula in bowl of aquarium water and then either poured into feeding tank or portioned out using a syringe.

Tip

- Although not as nutritious as brine shrimp, microworms will not swim away from fry. Where baby brine shrimp will remain active in the feeding tank, microworms will sit on the bottom where clumsy new fry can easily consume them.

Feel free to contact the friendly staff at Boronia Aquarium for further information



Image source;
www.getabetta.com



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