

# DIAMOND TETRA, *Moenkhausia pittieri*

SWAM July-Aug 2002 by Chase Klinesteker



Pair of Diamond Tetras, male on left

## INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

I was recently asked about breeding Diamond tetras (*Moenkhausia pittieri*). It had been a few years since I had kept and bred them, so I consulted my "3x5 computer", otherwise known as my "nonelectronic analog information retrieval system". Following are a few notes that might be helpful:

## DESCRIPTION

The diamond tetra gets to about 6 centimeters in size. The adult males' finnage is much longer than the females', including the ventral, anal, and especially the dorsal fin. The female has a slightly paler color, but both sexes have sparkling, reflective scales and red in their eyes. They need a fair amount of room but are beautiful and lively fish. Some sources recommend hard, slightly acid water for breeding, which can be obtained by running tap water through peat moss. Separating the sexes before breeding and conditioning them well seems to help. One source recommended PH of 6.6 to 7.0 in a nicely planted tank in a darker area (an oxymoron?). They will live well at 70 degrees but it was recommended to raise the temperature to 80 degrees for spawning. About 200 eggs are laid and they hatch in 1 day at 80 degrees. It was mentioned that they need infusoria for only a day or 2. They are somewhat more difficult to spawn and raise

so their price seems to hold up. Some have mentioned that they use soft water with salt added to spawn these fish.

### **MY EXPERIENCE**

Just to keep things interesting, my diamond tetras spawned in a tank with a freshly cleaned undergravel filter and a water change (all tap water) of about 40%. I collected the eggs from the gravel with a small cylinder gravel cleaner and siphon tube, rinsing and cleaning them off in rain water (RO would be good also). The eggs were placed in a quart pan of rain water with 1 drop of 5% methylene blue as an antifungicide. After hatching, the fry were rinsed again and placed back in the pan in clean rain water. Very slight aeration can help, but not too much. When they become free swimming (in about 5 days) I put them in a small 2 or 3 gallon tank with a sponge filter to begin feeding them. They seemed to take baby brine shrimp right away, although some of the slightly smaller fry may not survive. The fry were very sensitive to light as I would usually find them huddled under the sponge filter or tight to the leaves of some plants that I added. This probably means that low light would be better for spawning, the eggs, and raising the fry. I am not sure what the natural environment is for the diamond tetra, but I would guess it would be shaded streams, in the weeds, or heavy brush. At this point, my "computer" froze, as there was no more stored information on that fish, and I haven't yet found a way to connect it to the Internet!!