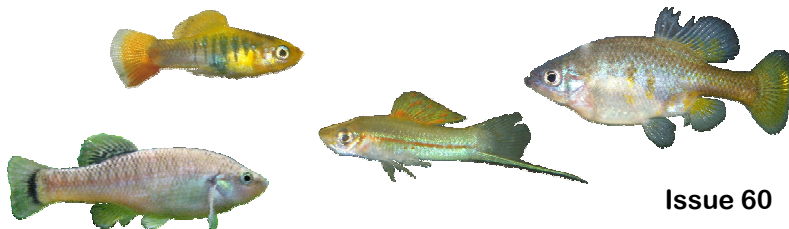




# Tank Notes



## Upcoming Meetings:

April: Charlie Grimes  
May: Chuck Davis  
June: Stephan Tanner  
July: Picnic  
Members only

April—June 2013

Issue 60

## GVAC Welcomes the 2013 ALA Convention April 25—28 Grand Rapids Michigan

You won't want to miss;

20 Class Livebearer Show  
Friday & Saturday Night "Gonopodium Galleria"  
American Goodeid Working Group Meeting  
Graduate Student Poster Sessions  
Vern Parish Fund Saturday Reception  
Vendor Room  
Saturday Night Awards Banquet  
Gigantic Sunday Auction  
And Much More

Don't miss out on the fun!

Register @

[www.ALA2013.com](http://www.ALA2013.com)

**More Fish, More Friends, More Fun!**



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## 2013 Board of Directors

President	Mike Monje	exstreamaquatix@gmail.com
Vice President	Ben VanDinther	aquariumservices@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Roger Miller	miller.roger1@att.net
Recording Secretary	Patrick Miller 616-336-5437	pmlife4@att.net
Corresponding Secretary	Tom Siegfried	tomsiegfried@charter.net
Sergeant-at-Arms	Chris Carpenter	christojanet@hotmail.com
Members at Large	Justin Sarns	sarnsj@gmail.com
	Pat Hartman	phat711@sbcglobal.net
	Kory Voodre	kvoodre@gmail.com
	Scott Tetzlaff	thefishguy@triton.net

## Committee Chairpersons

Membership	Ken Zeedyk	zekeshouse@wmol.com
Public Relations	Ken Zeedyk	zekeshouse@wmol.com
Breeders Award Program	Tom Siegfried	tomsiegfried@charter.net
Hort. Award Program	Steve Hosteter	fishguy311@yahoo.com
Raffle	Tom Siegfried	tomsiegfried@charter.net
Program Director	Ben VanDinther	aquariumservices@sbcglobal.net
Website Administrator	Ken Zeedyk	zekeshouse@wmol.com
Newsletter Editor	Patrick Miller 616-336-5437	pmlife4@att.net

## GVAC Fellows

The following is a list of Fellows of Grand Valley Aquarium Club. These are members who have contributed to making GVAC a successful club. They have held many positions within the club and donated countless hours doing those tasks that would not be completed except for their hard work. New Fellows are nominated by current fellows and voted on by the general membership.

Tim Boelema  
Fin Nielsen  
Jeff Vander Berg  
Ben VanDinther  
Ken Zeedyk  
Patrick Miller

Don't forget to thank them when you see them at meetings or other events.

GVAC Mailing address: Grand Valley Aquarium Club

PO BOX 325

Grandville, MI 49418-0325

GVAC Website: [www.GrandValleyAquariumClub.org](http://www.GrandValleyAquariumClub.org)

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Patrick Miller

GVAC Editor

PO BOX 325

Grandville, MI 49418-0325



## Presidents Corner

Welcome to another issue of GVAC Tank Notes. The club is off to real strong start in 2013, the HAP & BAP programs are running real strong, (next time you get your HAP or BAP slips signed please thank our Coordinators, Tom Siegfried BAP and Steve Hosteter HAP). This is the busy time of year for the club side of the hobby, with auctions, swap meets, and of course GVAC is hosting the American Livebearers Association Convention at the end of April. Please check our calendar for a complete listing of events, I encourage everyone to spread their fins a little and check out some of our neighboring club's events. We are very fortunate to live in an area where there are a lot of other clubs within driving distance!

If you have never been to a fish convention, this is a perfect opportunity to check one out. GVAC is hosting this event and we are bringing in some great speakers. There will be presentations on Plants, Live Foods, Fancy Guppy Breeding & Showing, and of course Livebearers. The ALA Convention always has a Show, the Show Room is open to all, Sunday will be a Livebearer and Plant Auction, which is also open to all. If you cannot attend the actual convention, I highly recommend driving out to see either the Show, or attend Sunday's auction. The website for the ALA convention is up and running, [www.ala2013.com](http://www.ala2013.com), you register online, or print it out and mail it in. This will be a fun and informative event, hopefully an opportunity for many of club members to test the waters at a national event.

GVAC is a very active club, with many great events, I encourage everyone to enjoy these, thank the many people involved in making these happen, and volunteer to help out with these events. Remember we need articles and photo's for the newsletter, and you need these for BAP & HAP levels also. Articles and photo's can be submitted to Patrick Miller, (Thank you Patrick for the great job you do on our newsletter).

The last thing I'd like to talk about is C.A.R.E.S.

([www.carespreservation.com](http://www.carespreservation.com)), this a great program to get involved with. Please take a little time and learn more about this program, and see if you can spare a little tank space for valid cause.

Best Fishes,

Mike Monje



Mike working on show stands for the 2013 ALA Convention

## Please support those who support GVAC

Blue fish Aquarium  
 Preuss Pets  
 ADG/Aqua Design Amano USA  
 Amazonas Magazine  
 Aquatic Gardeners Ass. - Karen Randall  
 Aquamaid Supplies  
 Boyd Enterprises  
 Cichlid Press  
 CichlidBreeding.com  
 Doctors Foster & Smith  
 Florida Aquatic Nurseries  
 Hagen  
 HBH Pet Products  
 Hikari USA  
 Kordon—Novalek  
 Marineland

Oddballfish.com  
 Ocean Star International  
 Penn Plax  
 Pet Supplies Plus  
 Pet Connection  
 Python Products  
 Repashy Superfoods  
 San Francisco Bay Brand  
 Seachem Laboratories, Inc.  
 SpectraPure  
 Ted's Fishroom  
 Tetra  
 TFH—Tropical Fish Hobbyist  
 Wardley—A Hartz Company  
 Zoo Med Laboratories Inc.



## Tank Notes

April 6	Michiana Aquarium Society Spring Auction Concord Mall, Elkhart IN Registration 9:00am—Auction @ 11am <a href="http://www.michiana-aquarium-society.org">www.michiana-aquarium-society.org</a>
April 13	<b>GVAC Meeting</b> <b>Charlie Grimmes</b>
April 14	GCCA Swap Best Western Plus <a href="http://www.gcca.net">www.gcca.net</a>
April 25-28	<b>ALA Convention hosted by GVAC</b> <b>Grand Rapids MI</b> <b><a href="http://www.ALA2013.com">www.ALA2013.com</a></b>
May 4	MCA Spring Auction 876 Horace Brown DR. Madison Heights MI <a href="http://www.michigancichlid.com">www.michigancichlid.com</a>
May 11	<b>GVAC Meeting</b> <b>Chuck Davis</b>
May 18-19	Michigan Guppy Breeders Show Roseville MI <a href="http://www.michianguppybreeders.com">www.michianguppybreeders.com</a>
May 24-27	American Killifish Association Convention Portland OR <a href="http://www.aka.org">www.aka.org</a>
May 25-27	GCCA Cichlid Classic Lombard IL <a href="http://www.gcca.net">www.gcca.net</a>
June 8	<b>GVAC Meeting</b> <b>Stephan Tanner</b>
July 13	<b>GVAC Picnic</b> <b>Location: TBA</b> <b>Members only</b>
July 25-28	ACA Convention Denver CO <a href="http://www.cichlid.org">www.cichlid.org</a>
August 10	<b>GVAC Meeting</b> <b>Game Show</b>
September 14	<b>GVAC Meeting</b> <b>Kevin Plazak</b>
September 21-28	Michiana Aquarium Society Show & Auction Concord Mall, Elkhart IN Registration 9:00am—Auction @ 11am <a href="http://www.michiana-aquarium-society.org">www.michiana-aquarium-society.org</a>
October 12	<b>GVAC Meeting</b> <b>Mike Helleweg</b>

## My Favorite Livebearer

By Chase Klinesteker photo by the author

When I was asked about what was my favorite livebearer, I had to think hard. There are many different species that I enjoy keeping for their interesting fins, colors, disposition, body shape, or behaviors. My choice of a favorite may surprise some people. Because of past pleasant experiences, I chose *Heterandria formosa*, the Mosquitofish, Dwarf Livebearer, or Least Killifish. Its diminutive size makes it adaptable to even the smallest of tanks, and nano aquariums are very popular now. Adult males only get about .8 inch and females only about 1.4 inches, and in fact, it is the smallest of all livebearers and the 7<sup>th</sup> smallest of all fish species! It comes from the South Eastern US, including Florida and adjacent coastal states, inhabiting shallow, sluggish, weed infested fresh waters. It also can be found in brackish waters. pH is best between 7 and 8 and it likes some hardness in the water. Because it is a US native species, it does not need a heated aquarium and 68 to 78 degrees is a good range, although it will survive well above and below that. Needless to say, the mosquitofish is a hardy and durable species of livebearer that is easily kept.

Feeding and breeding this fish is a snap also. It will eat most all foods, despite its small size, and will tear apart and eat blackworms, frozen adult brine shrimp, daphnia, and of course, flake foods. Some vegetable matter is important, so some spirulina flake is recommended. It is a very peaceful fish, even among its own kind, but somewhat shy, so a good number of plants are helpful in the aquarium. A species tank is probably best, although they will do well with other small peaceful fish, just so the

tiny males do not get eaten! It is a member of the *Poeciliidae* family of livebearers, but instead of having all her fry at once, the female will drop a fry or 2 every few days for about a month. If there is plenty of plant cover and the parents are well fed, the fry can be left with the parents. They will eat fine dry food and baby brine shrimp right away.



Female *Heterandria formosa* followed by two males

This fish is not colorful, but very attractive. On a grey body, a prominent black horizontal line goes from the eye to the tail and there is a black spot on the dorsal fin. The female also has a black spot on her anal fin. This gives the Mosquitofish a prim and perky appearance, and their fins always seem to be fully extended, a sign of good health. The male has a gonopodium that is 1/3 his body length.

The Mosquitofish is easy to keep, attractive, fun to watch, and has many interesting behaviors. I could describe it in one word that I am normally reluctant to use: “cute”!!

# For the Love of Livebearers- The *Cyprinodonts* that Defined a Hobby

By Heather Burke

The story begins with a fascination for keeping living things in glass boxes, as it often does when it comes to the aquarium hobby. For me, that was innate. It was natural to want to explore animal husbandry to a girl who loved making observations in the animal world. I would say the hobby began with my first real aquarium: a 29 gallon set up received on my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, the truth is, I fell in love when I saw my first baby fish.

Naturally, it would seem appropriate that a novice fish keeper would end up with livebearer fry. It's inevitable, even. So I will make mention that, yes, my baby fish was an itty bitty platy. Six of them, to be exact. How I stumbled upon them, though, hiding in the fake flora in the top of the tank, was a defining moment for me. It was the light bulb that went off in my head and the circuit that began to flow and inspire movement when I saw the tiny forms helplessly hiding, waiting for saving. I was in awe the day I plucked those six babies from their nest and began my quest to nurture them.

It wasn't more than a year before I found myself in the leagues of the aquarium society, directed by the information in the back of my favorite Tropical Fish Hobbyist. I showed up, rather helpless and scared. Just like those mickey mouse platies I had discovered. In that nervousness, though, was great anticipation. I was the first to arrive at a wintry meeting which seems so long ago now. The people who trickled in were friendly, and I eased a little. When bags of fish started appearing, as if by some miracle, my heart jumped. I was given a form to fill out. It asked a very basic question, at the bottom, of what kind of fish I kept. My answer, after some consideration, could only be livebearers. I was welcomed to SWMAS that night and experienced my first auction, bringing home *Ilyodon xantusi* for so cheap I was grinning from ear to ear.

I went on to keep a lot of livebearers over the years. I kept a little of everything, to be honest, but I had an affinity for those little toothy carps. They are easy to keep and breed, and the fry are quite the relief to raise compared to tiny egglayers. It should go without saying that Pat Hartman was instantly my idol. His was the first fish room I ever witnessed, and I have enjoyed many of his fish. Though I started out keeping a lot of the fancy varieties (the guppies and platies and mollies commonly available), my fish tanks were soon filled with wild types and "little ditch fish." I am not embarrassed to say in the least that my earliest BAP points went to a "big momma" *Gambusia affinis* plucked from the feeder fish tank at Meijer. I always did have an eye for details, sometimes illegally procuring bluegill in the same manner, as well as tadpoles and crayfish. That mosquitofish will always have my heart though. I have fond memories of the day she dropped 31 fry in the makeshift nursery I made her. It was two days after Christmas, but it felt better finding the little babies than opening any man-made gift.

I dabbled in trying to selectively breed my own guppies. I ended up with some half-endler half-half blacks. By and large, though, fancies fizzled for me. They would go for a few generations and then kinda die off. I remember buying a few of the half-reds that were circulating and I was not entirely impressed. Mind you, this was before moscovs were around. So, I took to whatever

bargains came my way. The goodeids did well for me, and I anticipate with my inevitable fish room expansion to add them back to my collection. They loved my hard tap water, and they loved even more being unheated.

So this will be the part of the article when I skim over some of my better experiences with livebearers. As a true hobbyist, I found they were all worth my time. Some things are especially ingrained in my mind however. In case anyone was wondering, those basslet goodeids weren't quite my favorite and they ended up donated to live in a fish tank in my principal's office. However, it was still the best two bucks I spent (along with every auction bargain).

When it comes to goodeids, I really only have experiences with three: *Allodontichthys tamazulae*, *Ameca splendens*, and *Xenotoca eiseni*. I got my *Ameca splendens* straight from the tanks of Pat Hartman, and they didn't disappoint. They have a subtle beauty and as expected males are the real stunners. Before long, I had a female so gravid I sensed the day she dropped. I took many pictures of the day I witnessed that female giving live birth. I noticed a few stillborns in her brood. It was absolutely fascinating and I dared not leave her until it was through. The pictures are stored on some hard drive somewhere, but the memories are with me always.

*Allodontichthys tamazulae* never spawned for me. In fact, I don't think I kept them long enough to grow them out to their potential. The reason I mention them here is because their begging antics always made me smile. They were the cutest Goodeids I ever had, and I would love to get them again to realize my dream of spawns. I likened them to little puppy dogs.

*Xenotoca eiseni* is what I would call my perfect summer pond fish. I tried them out in a 20 gallon tub one summer years ago and noted the electric-blue in the males dorsal area was as brilliant as any Malawi cichlid. This fish was also one I stumbled upon as it was giving birth. They have a bit of an attitude, but their fry are born cute-as-a-button.

Another notable livebearer, and one I found particularly endearing is *Limia perugiae*. I didn't particularly know much of *Limia*s until I brought home a trio. The males are quite sharp with an iridescence to them and a flashy dorsal. I remember vividly the joy when I discovered the first fry under a log in the tank. To me, they were each little treasures waiting to be found. A great fish and one I would dedicate any tank to stumble upon more young as I once did.

Somewhere along the line I decided that the golden teddy *Xenophallus umbratilis* was my favorite livebearer. It was an instant infatuation when I took home a small group by chance. They schooled together as babies in my 29 gallon community tank and were quite the peaceful creatures. They are very sharp fish, and possess a beauty that I can only describe as exceptional. Even for a wild livebearer, the sweet golden hue and the contrasting black dorsal are quite catching.

I have found that every livebearer I've encountered is a pleasure to deal with. The babies are born little replicas of the adults, and I've always enjoyed watching them grow and spawn and cycle

Continued on Page 10

## 2013 BAP Totals January - March

### Tom Siegfried—10

*Macropodus opercularis*  
*Labidochromis caeruleus*  
*Nimbochromis venustus*  
*Pelvicachromis pulcher*  
*Pundamilia nyererei* 'Mwanza Gulf'  
*Limia melanogaster*  
*Limia perugiae*  
*Poecillia butleri*  
*Xenotoca eiseni* 'Tamazula'  
*Melanotaenia maccullochi*

### Jeff VanderBerg—8

*Ancistrus* sp.  
*Ctenochromis horei*  
*Mikrogeophagus ramirezi*  
*Pterophyllum scalare*  
*Chapalichthys encaustus*  
*Xenophallus umbratilis*  
*Xenotoca variata*  
*Ampullaria cuprina*

### Kory Voodre—7

*Geophagus steindachneri*  
*Steatocranus tinanti*  
*Thorichthys* sp. "Mixteco Gold"  
*Gambusia holbrooki*  
*Limia melanogaster*  
*Poecillia butleri*  
*Neocardinia heteropoda* v. Red rilli

### Chris Carpenter—7

*Lamprologus callipterus*  
*Pseudotropheus saulosi*  
*Pseudotropheus williamsi* "North Ma-konde"  
*Steatocranus tinanti*  
*Tropheops macrophthalmus*  
*Gambusia holbrooki*  
*Xenotoca eiseni* 'Tamazula'

### Ken Zeedyk—7

*Hemigrammus erythrozonus*  
*Aspidoras spilotos*  
*Corydoras venezuelanus*  
*Rhinogobius rubromaculatus*  
*Poecillia butleri*  
*Danio albolineatus*  
*Elassoma okefenokee*

### Cyndi Westra—7

*Altamprologus calvus*  
*Cynotilapia* sp. White top hara  
*Cyrtocara moorii*  
*Neolamprologus multifasciatus*  
*Neolamprologus pulcher*  
*Placidochromis phenochilus*

### Roger Miller—5

*Mikrogeophagus ramirezi*  
*Girardinus metallicus*  
*Xiphophorus variatus*  
*Iriatherina wernerii*  
*Melanotaenia madagascar*

### Mike Monje—5

*Ancistrus* L279  
*Julidochromis marlieri*  
*Julidochromis ornatus* 'chitika'  
*Heterandria formosa*  
*Xenophorus captivus*

### Justin Sarns—5

*Metriaclima greshakei*  
*Pelvicachromis pulcher*  
*Protomelas spilontus* 'Mara Rocks'  
*Thorachromis brauschi* 'Lake Fwa'  
*Xiphophorus helleri*

### Patrick Miller—4

*Pelvicachromis taeniatus* 'Moliwe'  
*Girardinus metallicus*  
*Neoheterandria elegans*  
*Danio roseus*

### Scott Tetzlaff—4

*Cryptoheros chetumalensis*  
*Gephyrochromis lawsii*  
*Poecillia orri*

### Tim Monje—3

*Ancistrus* sp.  
*Girardinus falcatus*  
*Procambarus fallax* f. *virginalis*

### Travis Henkaline—2

*Aulonocara* sp. Red dragon variety  
*Neolamprologus brichardi*

### Tim Boelema—2

*Brachyrhaphis roswithae*  
*Girardinus uninotatus*

### Steve Hosteter—2

*Labidochromis caeruleus*  
*Ilyodon cortesae*

### Kim Oge—2

*Corydoras paleatus*  
*Neolamprologus multifasciatus*

### Phil Wurm—1

*Pomacea bridgesii*

### Mike Miles—1

*Procambarus* sp. *marmoratus*

### Dan Kraker—1

*Haplochromis* sp. Red Tail Sheller



GVAC Iron Aquascaper III was held at the March meeting. The contestants were Katrina from Blue Fish and Shelby from Preuss Pets. Two fully aquascaped tanks were completed within a 1 hour time limit. The tanks were then voted on and raffled off to support the club. A big thanks to Preuss Pets and Blue Fish for donating the materials for this competition and supplying contestants. Shown here is Katrina explaining her winning tank design.



## *Ammannia gracillis*

By Roger Miller

*Ammannia gracillis* is a marsh plant whose natural habitat is a place called Senegambia (Kasselman).

Where the h\_\_\_ is Senegambia?, is what I asked myself. Senegambia is (or was) on the west side (Atlantic ocean) of the continent of Africa. It was a short lived confederation between Senegal (pop. 12,211,181 & land area of 74,336 sq. miles) and the Republic of Gambia (pop. 1,660,200 & land area of 3,861 sq. miles), which is geographically surrounded by Senegal, that existed between 1982-1989 after which they went their separate ways again. In 1991 they signed a friendship treaty but tensions between the two countries still flare up intermittently. How about that, you get a little world geography and history lesson thrown in for good measure when you are trying to learn about a plant. Get a little of everything being a member of this club, now back to the plant.

The original group of cuttings was purchased from the Moby Dick Pet store when I went on the Big Dog Shop Hop - East on May 19 of 2012. For all of those who didn't go – sad to be you – the rest of us had a great time.



*Ammannia gracillis*

*Ammannia gracillis* is a stem plant with leaves that are a cognac or light chocolate brown (depending upon who is doing the description) which is not a color often seen in aquarium plants. Due to a lack of tank space I was unable to place the stems in multiple tanks so they all ended up in on tank. I did, however, split them into two groups at opposite ends of the tank (fortunately it worked out for the best this time). The tank they ended up in is a 29 gallon that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the tank has flourite dark as a substrate with the rest of the tank using flourite black sand. The water in this tank is mixed at a ration of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> tap water with 2/3<sup>rd</sup> s R.O. water, making it relatively soft (this for the fish species housed within. The water temperature is kept at 82-84 deg. F with water changes being made biweekly (usually). Flourish and Flourish Iron are added weekly at the recommended levels along with CO2 being supplied daily for a duration of 6 ½ hrs. Light is supplied for 10 ½ hours a day using a twin tube T5HO fixture with 6700K bulbs. Other plant species in the tank include *Echinodorus angustifolia* “Vesuvius”, *Cryptocoryne albida*, *Alternanthera reineckii* “cardinalis” plus a couple of others

along with a good size piece of branching drift wood that has a very healthy growth of some species of hair algae. Both groups did well from the beginning and it didn't take long for the stems to grow up to the top of the water and start growing horizontally across the surface.

Being a stem plant, *Ammannia gracillis*, is propagated by cuttings. This is accomplished by cutting back the stem 6-8” below the tip and replanting the cutting in the substrate and the piece remaining in the substrate with grow lateral shoots to replace the tip and forming new stems.

As stem plants go this one is pretty neat, I like the brown color it brings to the aquatic aquascape and given the right conditions it is relatively easy to grow.

In **Aquarium Plants**, by Kasselman, she states that (*Ammannia gracillis*) needs to be well illuminated and grows best in soft water at temps. above 24 deg. C (76 deg. F). These are the same conditions I provided it with and it did very well for me.

Now if I could find a nice live yellow colored plant to add to the reds, greens and brown, all would be good (or not!)

## GVAC Legacy Award



GVAC has been very fortunate to have a large variety of members; from the new hobbyist to the experienced hobbyist and every combination in-between.

Our club has benefited from our experienced members who regularly share their knowledge and offer advice.

Bernie Halverson has been a hobbyist

for longer than most people have been alive. Over the course of his life, he has helped to grow our hobby. An avid Killifish fan he is a founding member of the American Killifish Association (AKA). He was also an early advocate of dwarf white worms and back before time (the late 50's early 60's) gained national attention by convincing the Houston Aquarium Society to sell them.

Talking to Bernie is opening a treasure trove of information, from how he bred a certain fish to what was used to transport fish before plastic bags (yes there was a time without plastic fish bags but not peanut butter jars).

It is because of what he has done for GVAC and the hobby in general that GVAC presented Bernie Halverson with the first ever GVAC Legacy Award.

We look forward to many more years of advice and stories from Bernie and hope that his efforts encourage many generations of hobbyists.

## 2013 HAP Totals Jan - March

### Roger Miller

#### Vegetative

*Cryptocoryne albida*  
*Echinodurus* 'Tanzende Feverfeder'  
*Blyxa aubertii*  
*Lysimachia nummularia*  
*Rotal* sp. 'Bangladesh'  
*Salvinia oblongifolia*  
*Nesaea pedicellata*  
*Nesaea crassicaulis*

#### Flowering

*Alteranthera reineckii* 'Cardinalis'  
*Cypress heliferi*  
*Polygonum kawagoeanum*  
*Echinodurus* 'Tanzende Feuerfeder'

### Mike Monje

#### Vegetative

*Limnobium spongia*  
*Hygrophilia pinnatifida*  
*Shinnersia rivularis*  
*Ranunculus inundates*  
*Nymphoides* sp. Taiwan  
*Persicaria* sp. "Kwawgoeanum"  
*Hydrocotyle sibthorpioides*  
*Echinodurus angustifolius*

### Justin Sarns

#### Vegetative

*Hygro polysperma*  
*Ludwigia repens*  
*Microsorium pteropus*  
*Shinnersia rivularis*  
*Vallisneria Americana*

### Steve Hosteter

#### Vegetative

*Subwassertang*  
*Rotal* sp. 'vietnam'  
*Lysimachia nummularia*  
*Ludwigia repens*

### Andrew Kalafut

#### Vegetative

*Cabomba caroliniana*



*Echinodurus* 'Tanzende Feuerfeder' By Roger Miller

## *Najas Guadalupensis*; A blessing & a plague in the same plant

By Steve Hosteter

*Najas* grass or also called guppy grass is a livebearer staple. It can provide shelter and food for fry, it can provide cover for shy adults and it even helps in tank filtration. It can often be found stuffed in bags at GVAC auctions for a fair price. It grows well in almost any tank condition without any special lighting or substrate. A fast growing, loose branching stem like plant it grows floating in the water where it sends out anchoring roots into the substrate.

That is where the plague side of it comes in, it has over run my planted display tanks! Not that it is a bad plant by any means it simple does too well in my tanks. I can cut back my 55 gallon every two to three weeks! Also once it is established in the substrate it seems almost impossible to completely remove. All it takes is a little fragment to start all over again. This is the case in my 30 gallon planted tank, nothing beats pulling *Najas* out of my Madagascar lace plant. For my breeding, bare bottom tanks, this is not an issue just rinse out the tank completely and all gone.

Do not take me wrong I do love the stuff I use it in all my breeding tanks as fry cover mostly due to my laid back approach to breeding. If the fry do not make it on their own in a breeding colony I move on to a new fish. I have found that many species can be done in this manner from Killies to Cichlids and of course livebearers. Shrimp also do well in a tank full of *Najas*. The only way I have seemed to kill it is when I tried it in a my summer deck tub. With the heat we had last summer it didn't survive, I personally think it is not so much the light, but the high temps. The *Najas* in my tanks seemed to have slowed down as I struggled to keep tank temps below 84.

Alas, I do know, without much doubt, that as the temps cooled it came back in full swing in the fall just in time to bring it to the fall auction so that I could share my blessing and my plague with fellow fish breeders. So if you need a great easy plant to HAP or cover for fry, *Najas* is your plant. If you wish to use it in some neat aquascapeing venture keep those snips sharp and get every fragment out of the water as you cut it back or you will share in my plague.



*Najas* taking over a planted display tank, stock photo



## *Girardinus rivasi*

By Mike Monje

One of my greatest pleasures within the aquarium hobby is working with species that are rare and/or unusual. *Girardinus rivasi* is a newly described species that most aquarists haven't even heard of. All species within the *Girardinus* genus are livebearing fish belonging to the Family *Poeciliidae*, (the same Family that the popular Guppy, Mollies, and Swordtails belong to). I've worked with many of the species within the *Girardinus* Genus during my time in the hobby, and most have the same basic husbandry techniques, so when I found the opportunity to acquire *Girardinus rivasi* I took the leap.

The Genus of *Girardinus* contains eight known and described species with *Girardinus rivasi* only recently described, (1994 Wohlgemuth & Barus). Some literature will cite them as *Girardinus microdactylus rivasi*, while other literature simply cites them as *Girardinus rivasi*. It seems fish taxonomy is always under change and revision, it is the author's belief that there will be another species added to this genus in the future, which however would be another article. So for the sake of clarity we will refer to this species as *G. rivasi* for the remainder of this article. The type-site for this species is a man-made freshwater pool near Rancho Tesoro Hotel, Nueva Gerona, Isla de la Juventud, Cuba. The fish I acquired were juvenile F1's whose parents were from this location.

I could not find much literature on these fish or pictures for that matter, so I relied on the hobbyist who bred the original fish, his pictures showed a beautiful fish with a greenish body, vertical gold and black bars, with distinctive black markings on the dorsal fins. When my fish arrived they were small grey fish, I expected they washed out from the stress of shipping. Since they were four plus days in the shipping process, I acclimated them very slowly, as to avoid pH and temperature shock.

I placed my four juvenile *G. rivasi* into a 10 gallon tank with the following setup. A two inch thick layer of substrate, I used black Rift-Lake substrate from Carib-Sea. I added a sponge filter, a small heater, (set to 76 degrees F). Finally, I planted 2 small Amazon Swords, and added a couple of pieces of Hornwort, (left floating on the surface). My fish were not yet sexable when I placed them into this setup, so there was some growing out to do before they would be old enough to reproduce. During this grow-out phase I fed them Brine Shrimp Flake, Earthworm Flake, Spirulina Flake, and once a week or so a treat of freshly hatched Brine Shrimp. I changed about ten percent of the water every other week. Several weeks went by and the fish were still mostly grey. The fish grew quickly in this setup, and within two months they began to color up nicely. Then the larger female dropped some fry, (I only saw four fry from this first drop). I don't believe the count was low due to predation, (rather I believe it was due to the small size of the female), further evidence of this was the next drop was eight fry. I left the fry in the tank, (from both drops), and never saw any signs of predation from the parents. If any predation had occurred, it happened when she was dropping fry as I wasn't home for any of the fry drops. It really takes six to eight months for the fish to take on their full coloration and to give birth to larger drops of fry, (although I've never had a fry drop larger than ten).

*G. rivasi* have turned out to be real jewel in my fishroom, I real-

ly love it when a fellow hobbyist peers into this little 10 gallon tank and exclaims, "what are those?" These fish like the others I've worked with in the *Girardinus* Genus, are not only beautiful, they have proven to be quite hardy and fairly long lived for a little fish.

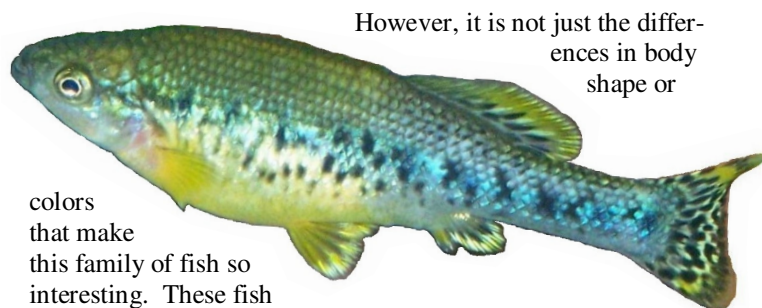
## Surprise, Surprise, Surprise!

By Patrick Miller the below fish is an *Ilyodon xantusi*

Many people might think that *Ilyodon xantusi* is my favorite livebearer. I have had them so long and love to extol the virtues of this fish, how friendly they are, how active they are, how entertaining they are to watch, that it may seem like they are my favorite and they are definitely up there on my favorite fish list. However, my favorite fish isn't really one fish but a group or family of fish. I really like fish of the family *Goodeidae*. It is not one fish but rather a family of fish and well *I. xantusi* does fall into that group (although some would say that it is not a valid species, in this case I am a splitter).

Looking through my GVAC BAP totals, I have bred, to date, 19 different species or variants of fish from this family. My fishroom hasn't been without a Goodeid in it since 2005 when I only had 6 or 7 tanks running. I now try to limit my fishroom to 30 tanks and my population of permanent residents from the *Goodeidae* family has grown. Besides those wonderful *I. xantusi*, I have made permanent space for *Allodontichthys tamazulae*, *Characodon lateralis* (Los Berros) and *Allotoca goslinei*. If I could, I would still have all of the Goodeids that I have bred swimming in my tanks, so many great fish and so little space.

Goodeids are a great group of fish. For such a small family (less than 50 species) there is a lot of variety in the fish. From the giants that can grow to over 6" in size to the diminutive that rarely grow over 2". They have bodies that are streamlined for swimming in fast moving water to deep body shapes for swimming in lakes. Their colors range from blues to reds with highlights of oranges and yellows and from flat to sparkling.



However, it is not just the differences in body shape or colors that make this family of fish so interesting. These fish have a variety of personalities to go with their diverse body shapes and colors. You never know what you are going to get until you bring a Goodeid home.

It is true that many of the members of this family can be difficult to keep and should be left to more experienced hobbyist. However, there are many that are easy to keep and are great for the less experienced hobbyist to keep. Members from the *Ilyodon* genus, *Chapalichthys* genus or *A. splendens* are all great candidates for the first time Goodeid keeper.

If you haven't had the opportunity to keep a Goodeid you might just be surprised at what great additions to your fish room they will make.

**Grand Valley Aquarium Club**  
**PO BOX 325**  
**Grandville MI 49418**  
Address correction requested

## Grand Valley Aquarium Club

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at 7PM

Holiday Inn Express  
Great room, just turn right at the big fish tank  
6569 Clay Ave SW  
Grand Rapids MI

There is no fee and everyone is welcome to attend!

## Membership Benefits

GVAC has membership cards this year. This is the first time that our club has done something like this and there is a benefit to having them.

## GVAC T-Shirts

With Membership Card	\$10ea
Without Membership Card	\$15ea

## Store Discounts

### Blue Fish Aquarium\*

10% off livestock  
20% off bulk food (does not include 5lb boxes)  
Club nights Tuesday & Wednesday 20% off livestock.

\*Must show GVAC membership card to receive discounts

Continued from page 5

through generations. I know now that I could never tire of this type of fish. With the American Livebearer Association Convention fast-approaching, I anticipate picking up where I left off. After a small hiatus from breeding fish, I'm back up to 20+ fish tanks and have been slowly adding livebearers to my collection. Yes, among them are perennial favorites: *Ameca splendens*, *Limia perugiae*, and *Xenophallus umbratilis*. Upon reflecting and writing this article, I know those platy fry so long ago are due some thanks. They firmly launched me into a world of incapable possibility. If not for the first forgiving fry, I might not have fostered the passion I have for keeping fish today.

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