



Blue Ridge Reef & Pet
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Goldfish

There might not be a more routinely abused pet in the entire industry than the common goldfish, *Carassius auratus*. This fish is descended from the Chinese grass carp and has been selectively bred for thousands of years into many shapes, patterns, colors, scale appearances and other mutations. They are largely vegetarian fish, and thrive in clean, cool water.

The inexpensive common goldfish seen in pet shops are the “comet” variety, which routinely reach over 20” in length in a clean environment. Here at Blue Ridge Reef, we regularly see customers who have bought goldfish without being told anything about their needs or potential size. Below we will outline proper care of these fish.

Know the variety you are getting!

There are round bodied goldfish, such as *Fantails*, *Orandas*, *Pearl Scales* and the like. Most of these only grow to the size of a baseball, but some will top out larger than a grapefruit. For these fish, allow about 20 to 25 gallons per fish. They are not candidates for fishbowls. Cartoons and commercials commonly depict these fishes in gallon bowls, but that is not proper long term housing! These fish have a large mass. Rules of thumb such as an inch of fish per gallon of water do not apply here. A four inch *Oranda* would weigh more than 50 one inch *Neon Tetras*. The *Comets*, *Koi*, and longer-bodied fish are best kept in outdoor ponds or very large aquaria (over 100 gallons).

Keep it Cool

Goldfish are temperate and do not need heaters. In fact, the water should always be below 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

High Carb Diets

Goldfish will eat almost anything. But a high carbohydrate diet with some vegetable matter is ideal. Frozen peas (husks removed) are a great treat. Bloodworms and such should be avoided or given very sparingly. All food should be eaten within 30 seconds to a minute. Goldfish will stuff themselves, and leftover food will rot.

Tank Mates

Goldfish are not schooling fish nor are they social. One kept alone will not become “lonely.” There aren’t a lot of cold water fish in the aquarium hobby. *White Cloud Mountain Minnows* and *Chinese Algae Eaters* are the two most commonly seen. White Clouds are small, schooling fish that would be intimidated by large active fish. Chinese Algae Eaters are poor algae eaters when large, and can be chasers that will harass your goldfish. The best tank mates are other goldfish, just provide plenty of room.

With proper care, your goldfish will live for decades. Many koi have been recorded to have lived well over a century.

- Chip Bridges