

## How To Decorate an Aquarium

Making up an aquarium at home used to be so simple; any hopeful aquarist who could put together a reasonable arrangement of aquatic plants, a few funny pebbles and a little plastic castle in a glass box could end up looking like a sensitive guy for his trouble. If you have ever seen the ethereal and exquisite effects of Japanese aquarium decor though, you know how real the artistry involved in aquascaping is. The organic and harmonious look achieved in Japanese aquarium decor principles often makes people imagine that these are actual attempts at re-creating a biotope, the habitat of an actual ecological community. As tempting as it is to imagine that, these are as man-made as anything you would see in any modern aquarium, and sometimes they are inspired by landscapes you would see above water to boot.

There is something about a living environment: the harder you try to artificially replicate it in your own aquarium, the more elusive it becomes. But if you are lucky and if you try, you may end up with aquarium decor that you find more beautiful than the original. The Japanese aquarium style sees the fish and the environment they live in as equally contributors to the final effect, after the philosophy that the frame can sometimes be considered to be as important as the painting itself.

The first step to designing your Japanese aquarium would be to pick the general shape of the landscape you want within the tank; popular landscape shapes include arranging for a generally concave look, where the surface rises all around a central valley, and a convex look where the landscape rises from the peripheries of the aquarium to a central prominence. The ideal aquarium decor layout would place before the viewer no more than one or two areas of focus, of something good and catchy to look at. There shouldn't be lot of stuff thrown in there, each piece competing for attention.

Japanese aquarium decor philosophy places some value in imbuing tank designs with a sense of depth. The most popular way to do this is to use lowrise aquarium plants and not bushy ones. The larger shapes in the aquarium need to be the rocks and the driftwood you bring in, and not the plants. Riccia and hairgrass are great choices; for a neat look with excellent depth, try using contrast - plants of different colors, some close-cropped and tidy, others that hang a little more free, and so on.

A natural underwater vista would include a number of rocks and pebbles of the same type. It might be tempting on your visit to an aquarium supplies store to pick a couple of all the best-looking rocks around for a Technicolor effect; while that might be the way to go for Vegas-like glamor, you must remember that you are going for the natural look, for Oriental restraint. Try to pick all your aquarium rocks, as many as you get, to belong to the same geological type, more or less. When you arrange them around the bottom of your tank, the placement that should work best is usually where the action of water currents would kick them around. The natural look is best achieved by rolling the rocks around and letting them rest where their center of gravity dictates.

Of course the aquarium you dream up can never be precisely to your standards; an aquarium is a living environment, and is a place of free biological growth. If you can somehow factor that into your core philosophy, you should be ahead of most first-time designers and perhaps you could say something grand to people who come in to admire your handiwork, like "According to ancient Japanese wisdom, the earth that supports life and the life that lives on it must all be free".

## About the Author

I enjoy blogging about pets and [christian books](#) on my [book reviews new mexico](#) website daily.

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