Proper Feeding Techniques using Phytoplankton and Zooplankton

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

With the appropriate liquid invertebrate food and the proper feeding technique, the nutritional needs of your reef invertebrates will be met without compromising water quality or the health of your inhabitants.

While researching the dietary needs of reef invertebrates, many beginning reef hobbyists encounter an unfamiliar category: liquid invertebrate foods. As a supplementary diet, liquid foods provide additional nutrients for reef aquariums, especially those with a large population of corals and other invertebrates.

However, as with any food, liquid invertebrate foods can compromise water quality if used improperly. Determine the dietary requirements of your particular invertebrates and follow a specific feeding regimen to maximize the benefits of liquid invertebrate foods.

Species Benefiting from a Liquid Diet:

- feather duster worms
- scallops and clams
- gorgonians
- soft and stony corals
- zoanthids and mushroom corals
- anemones
- shrimp and crabs

Species Requirements

Liquid invertebrate foods are available in two basic formulations, one comprised of phytoplankton and the other with zooplankton.

- **Phytoplankton**
  are tiny plant life, most often algae, and are best suited for herbivores and filter feeders such as feather duster worms, scallops, clams and gorgonians. Also, they are a food source for zooplankton and help establish the food chain.
- **Zooplankton**
  are minute animal life, including larval stages of crustaceans and other invertebrates, and tend to be larger than phytoplankton. Zooplankton are ideal for carnivores such as soft and stony coral, zoanthids, mushroom corals, anemones, shrimp and crabs.

Invertebrates with fine feathery feeding apparatus or gills tend to feed on phytoplankton and invertebrates with larger polyps or more robust feeding apparatus prefer zooplankton.

Feeding Regimen

As with any food, it is crucial not to overfeed your invertebrates. Liquid invertebrate foods are nutrient-rich solutions and uneaten portions will break down to compromise water quality, leading to aggressive algae growth. It is easy to overfeed with liquid invertebrate foods, especially in reef aquariums that contain fish and have a sparse population of corals or invertebrates. To avoid this, try either of these approaches:

- **Feed sparingly -**

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS:

- **PhytoMax Phytoplankton** is rich in EPA, DHA, and amino acids for maximum benefit to marine

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Liquid invertebrate foods are supplemental foods and should be used in small quantities. Remember, when you feed your fish, you are indirectly feeding your invertebrates as well.

- **Target feed -**
  Minimize waste and overfeeding by using a clean medicine dropper, or pipette to squirt a small amount of the liquid invertebrate food about an inch or two from the intended invertebrate. By targeting the specific animal, the food will be utilized efficiently.

In the ocean, plankton is one of the smallest particles in the food web. Yet, it is responsible for supporting an incredibly diverse array of species, from the barely visible planktonic feeders to the largest predators. There are a variety of coral and invertebrate foods now available. BioPlankton is a preserved algae feed that meets the needs of the most demanding saltwater aquarist and mariculture professional. Through the dynamic of the marine food web, BioPlankton and CoralPlankton provide nutrient-rich plankton to direct and indirect consumers in the captive marine food web.

invertebrates.

- **ZooMax Zooplankton** is a highly concentrated suspension of marine zooplankton ideal for filter-feeding invertebrates.
- **ZooPlex Invertebrate Foods** is a suspension of whole bio-engineered marine zooplankton.

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