Certificate in Marine Aquarium Care

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Marine invertebrates are fascinating creatures that can make wonderful additions to a marine aquarium. However, caring for these animals requires specialized knowledge and attention to detail. In this course, we will cover key terms and vocabulary related to the care of marine invertebrates in a marine aquarium.

1. Invertebrates: Invertebrates are animals that do not have a backbone. In the marine aquarium hobby, invertebrates refer to a wide range of creatures, including corals, anemones, shrimp, crabs, snails, and more.

2. Polyps: Polyps are small, cylindrical, and typically sessile animals that are common in marine aquariums. They can be found in corals, anemones, and other invertebrates. Polyps are responsible for the growth and reproduction of many marine invertebrates.

3. Symbiosis: Symbiosis is a close and often long-term interaction between two different species. In the marine aquarium hobby, symbiosis is commonly seen between corals and zooxanthellae, a type of algae that lives within the coral tissues and provides them with nutrients.

4. Zooplankton: Zooplankton are tiny animals that float in the water column and serve as food for many marine invertebrates. In the aquarium hobby, zooplankton can be cultured and fed to filter-feeding invertebrates such as corals and anemones.

5. Detritus: Detritus is a term used to describe organic matter that accumulates at the bottom of the aquarium. It can be made up of uneaten food, waste, and dead plant and animal material. Detritus can be harmful to marine invertebrates if allowed to build up in the aquarium.

6. Calcium: Calcium is an essential element for the growth and health of many marine invertebrates, especially corals and other calcifying organisms. In a reef aquarium, calcium levels need to be monitored and maintained at appropriate levels to support the growth of these animals.

7. Alkalinity: Alkalinity refers to the buffering capacity of the water in the aquarium. It is important to maintain stable alkalinity levels in a reef aquarium to ensure the health and growth of marine invertebrates. Alkalinity is typically measured in dKH (degrees of carbonate hardness).

8. Salinity: Salinity is the concentration of salt in the water. Marine invertebrates are adapted to specific salinity levels, and it is important to maintain stable salinity in the aquarium. The recommended salinity for most marine invertebrates is around 1.025 specific gravity.

9. Lighting: Lighting is crucial for the health and growth of photosynthetic marine invertebrates such as corals and anemones. Different types of lighting, such as LED, T5, and metal halide, can be used in a reef aquarium to provide the appropriate spectrum and intensity of light for these animals.

10. Flow: Water flow is essential for many marine invertebrates, as it helps to transport nutrients and oxygen to the animals and remove waste products. Adequate water flow can prevent detritus buildup and promote the health of invertebrates in the aquarium.

11. Quarantine: Quarantine is the practice of isolating new marine invertebrates in a separate tank before introducing them to the main aquarium. Quarantine helps to prevent the spread of diseases and parasites to the existing inhabitants of the aquarium.

12. Acclimation: Acclimation is the process of gradually adjusting marine invertebrates to the conditions of the aquarium. This can involve temperature acclimation, salinity acclimation, and drip acclimation to ensure a smooth transition for the animals.

13. Predation: Predation is a common challenge in marine aquariums, as some invertebrates may prey on others. It is important to research the compatibility of different species and provide appropriate hiding places and territories to prevent aggressive behavior and predation.

14. Water Parameters: Monitoring water parameters such as temperature, pH, ammonia, nitrite, and nitrate levels is essential for the health of marine invertebrates. Regular water testing and maintenance help to ensure stable water conditions in the aquarium.

15. Filtration: Filtration is important for removing waste products and maintaining water quality in the aquarium. Different types of filtration, such as mechanical, biological, and chemical filtration, can be used to keep the water clean and clear for marine invertebrates.

16. Feeding: Feeding marine invertebrates can vary depending on the species. Some invertebrates are filter feeders and require zooplankton or phytoplankton as food, while others are omnivores or herbivores and can be fed with a variety of foods such as algae sheets, pellets, and frozen foods.

17. Disease: Marine invertebrates are susceptible to diseases such as bacterial infections, parasitic infestations, and viral outbreaks. It is important to observe the behavior and appearance of invertebrates regularly and quarantine sick animals to prevent the spread of disease in the aquarium.

18. Fragging: Fragging is the practice of propagating corals and other invertebrates by cutting or breaking off a piece of the parent colony and allowing it to grow into a new individual. Fragging can help to expand coral colonies and share specimens with other hobbyists.

19. Overcrowding: Overcrowding can stress marine invertebrates and lead to aggressive behavior, competition for resources, and poor water quality in the aquarium. It is important to research the adult size and space requirements of invertebrates before adding them to the aquarium.

20. Compatibility: Compatibility refers to the ability of different marine invertebrates to coexist peacefully in the same aquarium. Some invertebrates may be territorial, aggressive, or prey on others, so it is important to choose compatible species and provide adequate space and hiding places for each animal.

In conclusion, caring for marine invertebrates in a marine aquarium requires knowledge of key terms and concepts related to water quality, lighting, feeding, disease prevention, and aquarium maintenance. By

understanding these terms and applying them in practice, aquarists can create a healthy and thriving environment for their marine invertebrates.