

## Bristlenose Pleco or Catfish (*Ancistrus Temminckii*)

**Distribution:** Brazil, South America

**Water temperature:** 21-25 degrees Celsius

**Max size:** 5-6 inches

**Ideal tank size:** 100 litres and above

**Sexing:** Males have long branching bristles on the front, sides and top of the head. Females have much shorter bristles that are only found on the front of the head.

The Bristlenose Pleco (BN) is generally a very solitary fish and can be kept alone or as a pair (one male, one female ideally). Keeping two males together can sometimes result in 'algae' wars, arguing over food and hiding spots.

A BN will spend most of its time hiding away during the day and be on the hunt for its favourite food, algae, when the lights go off. Using their strong mouth as a suction cup, they love clinging on to bogwood/driftwood, rocks, plants and the aquarium glass.



A varied landscape, including rocks, wood, plants and hiding spots should be provided. They do best with a mixture of areas to explore, but usually decide on a favourite cave.

The choice of substrate is quite open as most of their time will be spent clinging on to something else and they are also a very tough armor-plated fish. A medium-fine gravel or sand would most likely be a better choice but mainly due to aesthetics.



I have a male/female pair in my community aquarium and they have happily found their separate living areas. They graze on food whenever they are hungry and sleep the rest of the time. I always leave the back wall of the tank uncleaned, so a good supply of algae is always available to them. They love cucumber/courgette as well, which adds fibre to the diet. Supplemental algae wafers are provided if/when needed.

Given the right conditions, which basically involves adding a one ended cave to the tank, a happy pair will breed very easily and up to a hundred or more eggs (see photo) can be laid every 2-3 weeks. Breeding season in my tank lasted nearly six months!