



by Pedro Rosa

Dutch Tank by the rule... here's what Pedro considered making his own Dutch challenge:

Why? Because I love this kind of tank! Because having to comply to certain rules gives be some challenges that aquascaping doesn't have...

I want to continue to learn good trimming techniques regarding large bunch of stem plants and many different species at the same tank. Plants have different growth rates and having a tank with so much different plants, should be a challenge having it looking nice and balanced most of the time.

... and a Dutch Tank is really about the growth and arrangement of aquatic plants!!!

Over the last months I read some stuff about Dutch Tanks. Since the end of August (2015) I read some of those sources again.

So, what do I want?

I want a tank with a good first impression, great plant contrast and a nice perspective and depth of field, knowing that this can only be achieved with... plants!

From my readings and talks with someone used to this type of aquariums, I made a small rule list:

- Traditional focal points / rule of thirds. Red plants should be placed accordingly.
- No two plants of the same color (similar colors shouldn't also be placed next to each other).
- No two plants with the same leaf shape should be placed next to each other.
- Plants should be placed in "streets", wider at the front, narrow at the back, hiding away behind other plant preferably. This way a better depth is achieved.
- Plants can't be repeated.
- Aim for good contrast but also simplicity.

It's obvious that a great number of plants are needed for making a Dutch on 120cm. Controlling all those plants is a must - or there is a chaos waiting for me!

I found that following the leaf shape rule is much easier than the color rule!

Then we have the height of the plants that should also be different for plants next to each other. And finally, we have fore/middle and background plants... and having these possible three rows knowing that plants should be placed forming "streets" of plants that will get smaller to the back of the tank... I think you see the difficulty in planning a Dutch tank.

After 3 months some larger leaf plants were clearly needed, so I chose Nymphaea Lotus and Hygophila simanensis 53B.

Plants used in this layout

) Staurogyne repens	(049G TC)	4 pcs.
) Micranthemum tweediei 'Monte Carlo'	(025 TC)	3 pcs.
) Bacopa caroliniana	(043)	2 pcs.
) Lobelia cardinalis	(053C)	3 pcs.
) Cryptocoryne beckettii 'Petchii'	(108A)	2 pcs.
) Crinum calamistratum	(094A)	3 pcs.
) Murdannia keisak	(135)	3 pcs.
) Proserpinaca palustris 'Cuba'	(037C TC)	3 pcs.
) Heteranthera zosterifolia	(096 TC)	3 pcs.
) Pogostemon erectus	(053F)	3 pcs.
) Myriophyllum mattogrossense	(037)	3 pcs.
) Limnophila sessiliflora	(047)	2 pcs.
) Nymphaea lotus	(019)	1 pcs.
) Rotala macrandra	(032 TC)	3 pcs.
) Hygrophila corymbosa 'Siamensis 53B'	(053B)	2 pcs.
) Limnophila hippuridoides	(047C)	2 pcs.
) Pogostemon helferi	(053H)	3 pcs.
) Cyperus helferi	(133A)	2 pcs.

Technique

Aquarium:	(OWN DESIGN)CUSTOM MADE
Volume:	300 L
Light:	Light Mas Was LED 4x 30W
Substrate:	Tropica Aquarium Soil and Soil Powder
Gravel:	Tropica Aquarium Soil and Soil Powder
Decoration:	None
Filter:	Eheim 3 Pro
CO2:	25mg/L
Fertiliser (weekly):	100 ml Tropica Specialised per week
Maintenance (hours per week):	1-2