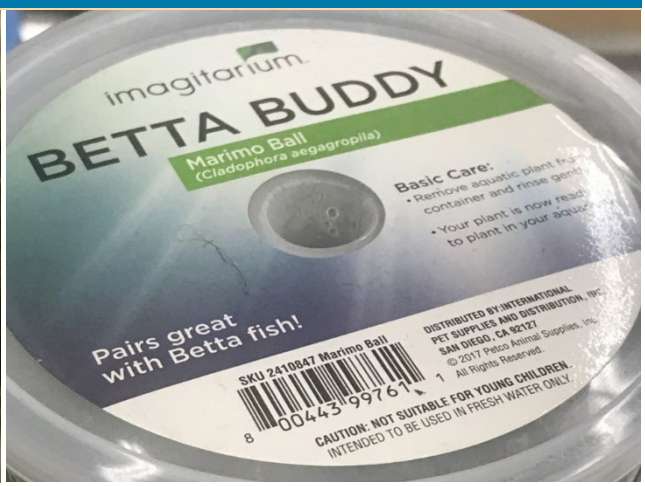
Zebra Mussels Found in Aquarium Moss National Distribution



Aquatic Invasive Species - Alert

Washington State responded to an alert of zebra mussels spotted in aquarium moss. WDFW confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in "Betta Buddy" brand *Marimo moss balls*. Several other states have reported the presence of both live and dead zebra mussels from this brand of Moss Balls at other retailers.

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) are regarded as the most threatening environmentally and economically invasive species in North America. They are small, fingernail-sized mollusks that can stay alive for several days outside of water and are common hitchhikers on boats and aquarium plants.

Two methods for aquarium owners to safely dispose of the moss ball(s):

1) Remove the moss ball(s) and place in a plastic bag. Put the bag in the freezer and leave for at least 24 hours. After that, the moss ball(s) can be disposed of in the trash.
2) Place moss ball(s) in boiling water for at least one full minute. After that, the moss ball(s) can be disposed of in the trash.

Aquarium species and accessories:
Collect the fish & plants and place them in another container. Dispose of the water in a sink or toilet. All municipal wastewater is treated to kill all pathogens, and septic tanks are fully self-contained underground.

Carefully use water that is 140 degrees to flush and coat all the tank and accessory surfaces. It is recommended that you do another water change within a week and continue to monitor the tank for any unusual aquatic growth.

If you do not have access to high temperature water, a 1/3 cup of unscented household bleach per gallon of water can be used as a disinfectant. Allow the aquarium, substrate, rocks, décor, and filter media to soak in the bleach water solution for 10-15 minutes. After adequate contact time, thoroughly rinse off all items prior to resetting up the aquarium. When resetting up the aquarium, dispose of the previously used filter media and replace with new media. Finish by using a dechlorinating product to neutralize any residual chlorine prior to reintroducing aquatic life.

For extremely large aquariums that you may not be able to completely dewater/decontaminate, dispose of the moss ball(s) as above. Officials recommend that the public conduct frequent water changes and continue to monitor the tank for any unusual aquatic growth.

WDFW and the Washington Invasive Species Council recommends that anyone who thinks their aquarium may be carrying invasive mussels to utilize the online reporting options! It is as easy as taking a photo and submitting for an expert to review. https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/ .

Contact For more information:
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Don’t Let it Loose

WASHINGTON STATE
Washington Invasive Species Council

Join our voluntary network that works to rehome pets!

Don’t Let it Loose – Pets released into the wild harm native wildlife species

Abandoned pets and plants that are released into the wild may become a serious problem. Never release unwanted home or classroom pets, animals, or plants into the wild, such as rivers, streams, lakes, or stormwater ponds.

Most unwanted pets will not survive in the wild and may suffer before death. If it does manage to survive, it may harm the environment and businesses. Invasive species cost the United States billions of dollars each year. Some of the most devastating invasive species originally were sold as pets or plants for gardens, ponds, and aquariums.

The recent discovery of invasive zebra mussels hitching a ride inside Marimo moss balls is an excellent example of a species we definitely don’t want to let loose in our state.

Actions you can take:

1. Join our ever-growing network of aquariums and pet stores that either re-home unwanted pets or provide pet owners with advice and answer questions.
   Join by e-mailing; InvasiveSpecies@rco.wa.gov.
2. Request resources such as flyers, stickers, fact sheets, etc. to post in your business.
3. Contact us, sign up for our newsletter, or learn more through our website: invasivespecies.wa.gov
4. If you see something, say something! Washington Invasive Species Council has a FREE app in which you can report suspected invasive species. Download in the app store (WA Invasive), or head to our website for more.