**Fish, Plants, and Fish Food**

 **A Factsheet for Operating the AquaPono© Mini System**

**What kind of fish can I put in the AquaPono© system?**

There are many different types of fish that can be used for aquaponics from goldfish to perch; almost any fresh water fish can be used. **Be sure to check local regulations regarding species of fish allowed.** Often the rules are more lenient for the hobbyist than for a business or raising for profit.

Examples of fish that can be used in mini system: Goldfish, small koi, freshwater ornamental fish. Other fish such as tilapia and catfish may be used but the system size restricts the amount of fish and how large they can get.

In larger systems, fish that have been used include tilapia, catfish, perch, large koi, bluegill, barramundi, crappie, trout, carp, pacu, murray cod.

**How many fish can I put in the AquaPono© system?**

The rule of thumb for how many fish can be put in a system of this scale is one inch of fish per gallon of water. Do not exceed this amount. Fewer fish may be used but this means you may have to increase feed input to make sure the plants get enough nutrients.

**What kind of plants can I put in the AquaPono© system?**

Starting out with plants that require less nutrients – such as leafy greens or watercress – is essential. After that, plants requiring more nutrients may be grown. Rice, cantaloupes, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, peppers, beans, beets, broccoli, collards, basil, cilantro, papaya, carrots, lettuce, stevia, moringa, dill, chard, okra, peas, parsley, chives, ornamentals, medicinal herbs, cut flowers, taro, strawberries, eggplant, spinach, watercress, azolla, and duckweed, have all been successfully grown in aquaponics.

Lettuce and certain herbs are great crops in the system because pest pressure is low and production cycles are short.

The size of the mini system will restrict the amount of these crops that can be produced.

**How many plants can I put in the AquaPono© system?**

This will depend on the type of crop. Plant according to instructions for crop; you can plant up to as many plants that will fit (with the appropriate spacing) in the grow bed.

**What do I feed the fish?**

Each species of fish has a specific diet. For ornamental and goldfish, standard fish flakes from a pet store will often suffice. We have found that the comets in our system prefer flakes over pellets.

**How often do I feed the fish?**

The fish should be hand fed twice a day with as much food as they can eat in 5 minutes. Do not underfeed or overfeed the fish. Underfeeding can cause a lack of nutrients in the system that will affect plant growth. The overfeeding of the fish can cause poor water quality. Hand feeding fish allows for you to make sure fish get the appropriate amount of food and also gets the fish use to objects moving around the tank. The fish will be less stressed when objects pass by the tank if they are used to it. This is also a good way to bond with the fish. Be sure to remove any excess feed using a clean net.