Assassin Snails (Clea helena)

Critters Direct
www.crittersdirect.com

14 August 2016

**INFORMATION GUIDE**

**Hobbyist Experience Level**
Moderate

**Lifespan:** 2-3 years

**Size:** Max. length ~1”

**Color:** Black, Orange

**Diet:** Omnivore

---

**Scientific Classification**
- Kingdom: Animals
- Phylum: Mollusca
- Class: Gastropoda
- Order: Anentome
- Family: Buccinoidea
- Genus: Clea
- Species: Clea helena

**Natural Predators**
- Birds
- Turtles
- Fish
- Insects

**Description**

The Assassin Snail (Clea helena) is present throughout Southeast Asia, especially in Malaysia, Thailand, and in Lake Toba on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It has become a highly sought after snail in the western aquarium trades business for its ability to prey on pest snails. As well, they do well in captivity and thrive in mature aquariums with substrates rich in dead and decaying animal matter.

Their conical, yellow and chocolate-brown striped shell makes them an attractive addition to any aquarium. Like many other snail species they use a siphon, which can usually be seen sticking out of the shell, to breathe. It’s nearly impossible to distinguish male assassins from female.

Keeping 3-5 assassin snails in your aquarium is recommend to keep pest snails at bay. Snails prefer hard water as soft water can lead to shell deterioration. As is the case with all tropical fish and invertebrates the aquarium should be filtered and fully cycled before introducing your snail to it.

**Water Parameters**
- Water temperature: 65° – 77° F
- pH: 6.5 – 7.5
- kH: 2-15
- **Calcium:** Snails need calcium to maintain their shell health. This can be achieved by floating cuttle bone, using crushed coral for substrate, feeding them food rich in calcium such as kale, spinach and other greens, and using over the counter calcium supplements.

**Tank mates/Diet/Feeding**

Bear in mind that Assassin Snails don’t just eat pest snails. Ornamental snails are also at risk if housed in the same tank. A few Assassin Snails can wipe out entire populations of pond snails, ramshorn snails, and Malaysian trumpet snails. Plants on the other hand are safe as assassins are on the hunt for protein. While nothing replaces a steady supply of live snails for your assassins, they will eat other protein rich foods such as:

- Algae wafers (because they are also high in protein)
- Fish food flakes
- Blood worms
- Brine shrimp

**Breeding**

Unlike many snail species, Assassin Snails require both male and female to breed. Other than making sure water parameters are correct, not much else is required to encourage them to breed once they are of age (~ 1 year old). The following facts and suggestions are provided:

- To encourage breeding make sure there is plenty of food for them to eat
- Assassins love to lay their eggs at the base of plants
- They also love laying eggs on sponges
- Increase water temperature to high-70's F
- Light colored, square shaped egg sacs will begin to appear
- There’s 1 baby snail per egg