



by George Farmer

Last year I spent several months overseas with my job and wanted to create a nice aquascape upon my return home. This layout took a while to plan and I shared the whole process on the UKAPS forum (www.ukaps.org/forum). The journal has over 50,000 hits.

I originally was going to go for a rock-based design (Iwagumi) but eventually decided to use Manzanita Wood and Petrified Wood. I really wanted to try out a technique that I had recently heard about with moss. The moss is chopped up into very fine pieces then attached to the décor and grown out of water but in a humid environment.

I contacted Tropica and they recommended the use of a bio-yoghurt to mix with the moss. So I blended the moss (*Riccardia chamedryfolia* and *Fissidens fontalus*) with yogurt and reverse osmosis water in a handheld blender. I then simply attached the moss "paste" onto the wood and stones using a paintbrush.

I planted all of the other plants into wet soil (TMC NutraSoil) and covered the aquarium with glass. I misted the plants every day with reverse osmosis water mixed with a small amount of liquid fertiliser using a hand spray mister. This is known as the dry-start method.

After 3 weeks I flooded the aquarium and the moss remained attached to the rocks and woods, which was a big relief. The other plants grew well initially using the dry-start method but some species did not adapt very well to underwater life and melted.

For this reason I will only use the dry-start method for growing mosses in the future. The blender technique using yoghurt worked brilliantly and is perfect for attached very fine plants like *Riccardia chamedryfolia*.

Later in the aquascape's life I changed and added new plants. The best addition was *Hemianthus 'Cuba'* that has mixed with the mini hairgrass very nicely making a lovely texture in the foreground.

Tip! All the different kinds of plants require time and knowledge about maintenance.

Technique

Aquarium:	TMC
Volume:	80 L
Light:	2 x TMC 1500 (30W, 6500K) LED tiles
Gravel:	TMC NutraSoil
Filter:	Fluval G3
CO2:	25-30ppm
Fertiliser (weekly):	21 ml Specialised Fertiliser
Maintenance (hours per week):	1-2

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Plants used in this layout

1)	<i>Eleocharis pusilla</i> 'Mini'	(132B TC)	2 pcs.
10)	<i>Lindernia rotundifolia</i>	(045)	1 pcs.
2)	<i>Eleocharis parvula</i>	(132C)	1 pcs.
3)	<i>Micranthemum callitrichoides</i> 'Cuba'	(048B)	3 pcs.
4)		()	2 pcs.
4)	<i>Helanthium tenellum</i> 'Green'	(067A TC)	2 pcs.
5)		()	2 pcs.
6)	<i>Fissidens fontanus</i>	(002F)	5 pcs.
7)	<i>Rotala indica</i> 'Bonsai'	(033E TC)	1 pcs.
8)	<i>Ludwigia palustris</i> 'Super Red'	(035B)	2 pcs.
9)		()	2 pcs.