

# **Aquatic Experience Aquascaping Live! Contest**

## **Sanctioned and Presented by: The Aquatic Gardeners Association**

### **Small Tank Category:**

- All small tank entrants will receive a new 7.9 gallon Fluval Flora Aquatic Plant Kit as well as an upgraded CO2 system, the Fluval CO2 "88" system...with a combined value of over \$200 dollars! Entrants will also receive a show floor pass good for all three days of the event. The competition is limited to 28 contestants with the first through sixth place winners receiving cash prizes and ribbons. The first place winner will also be our guest for the Aquatic Experience Keynote Dinner Banquet on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at 6:30pm.
- There is an "early bird" small tank entry fee of \$75 dollars available to all contestants that sign up prior to September 5, 2014. The entry fee will return to \$99 dollars after Sept. 5, 2014. The competition is limited to the first 28 paid entrants. To enter please go to [www.aquascapingcontests-sign-up.com](http://www.aquascapingcontests-sign-up.com)
- The 7.9 gallon Fluval Flora Aquatic Plant Kits provided at show-site will be supplied without the standard kit background. The back of the tank will be plain glass. The tanks will be supplied with an upgraded CO2 system, the Fluval CO2 "88" System. This system has a bubble counter and diffuser. We will have extra substrate and light colored cosmetic sand available for use on-site as needed.
- Entrants will check-in and pick-up their pass for the exhibit area and show floor at the registration counters located at the entrance to the Show.
- Aquascapes must be completed between the hours of 12:00(noon)-6:00pm on Friday, November 7, 2014 and 10:00am-1:00pm on Saturday, November 8, 2014. We have scheduled all aquascaping activities to take place during show hours so that attendees can watch and enjoy following the works-in-progress.

### **...OR small tank entrants may:**

- Supply their own 7.9 gallon Fluval Flora Aquatic Plant kit and set it up for grow out any time prior to the contest.
- Tanks established ahead of time must be set-up on-site during the aquascaping times stated above.
- Entrants who chose to supply their own tank ahead of time will still receive a new 7.9 gallon Fluval Flora Aquatic Plant Kit and upgraded CO2 system.

### **Additional Small Tank Info:**

- All entrants MUST use a Fluval Flora tank, light and CO2 system (if needed) during the exhibition. It is permissible to use alternate lighting and CO2 diffusion systems during the grow out period.

- Entrants MAY chose to substitute other substrate and filter and may use a background of their choice...or no background at all. Entrants may use a heater if they choose. Entrants are responsible for supplying any and all substitutions. If you have any questions about a substitution, please contact Karen Randall with the AGA at [krandall@rdcpa.biz](mailto:krandall@rdcpa.biz)
- If necessary, additional electrical outlets will be available on-site.
- Entrants are responsible for choosing and providing all hardscape, plants and animals for their aquascape.
- Animals MAY be used in the tank, but it is the responsibility of the entrant to select animals appropriate for the size of the tank. Live Animals are NOT a requirement of the competition.
- Important note-There will also be several micron filters available for use as needed to clear tanks after set-up. These will be shared by entrants for both contests as needed.

### **Prize Money:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	\$700.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	\$500.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	\$300.00
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	\$200.00
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	\$100.00
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	\$100.00

- Contest Judging-Celebrity judges will be Oliver Knott, Oliver Lucanus, Brandon McLane, Karen Randall and Bailin Shaw. Judging will take place on the show floor from 1:00pm-4:30pm on Saturday, November 8, 2014. Winners will be announced and prize money awarded on the show floor at 5:00pm on Saturday, November 8, 2014. The first prize winner will be our invited guest to attend the Aquatic Experience Keynote Dinner Banquet being held on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at 6:30pm. Ribbons will be displayed on the winning tanks through the end of the Show.
- At the conclusion of the Show, the small tanks will remain the property of the entrants. All small tanks must be taken down and removed by the entrants at the close of Show on Sunday, November 9, 2014 at 3:00pm. Any tanks not claimed by 8:00pm on Sunday, November 9, 2014 will become the property of the Aquatic Experience.

### **Large Tank Category (AGA-Team Invitational):**

- Teams interested in competing (\$2,000.00 in prize money) should fill out the "Team Invitational" entry on the Aquatic Experience website at [www.aquascapingcontestsign-up.com](http://www.aquascapingcontestsign-up.com) by no later than the extended deadline of Friday, September 5, 2014.
- Each team must submit a minimum of 4 and maximum of 6 digital images of aquascapes done by members of the team.
- From the submitted entries, 6 teams will be chosen by the AGA Board of Directors to compete in the invitational. The 6 finalist teams will be announced on Tuesday, September 9, 2014.
- Teams assume all responsibility for their travel expenses. Each member of the team (up to 5 individuals) will receive passes to the exhibit area and show floor good for all three days of the

### Aquatic Experience.

- Each team will be provided with the following equipment-One 75 Gallon Deep Sea Aquatics aquarium (48.5"x18.5"x19.25"), one cabinet stand for above tank, one T5HO Quad light fixture, one glass canopy, one Fluval 406 Canister Filter and adequate dark colored substrate (TBD, but probably Eco-Complete). We will also have a smaller amount of white or light colored cosmetic sand available for the use of participants upon request.
- Teams must use the tank, cabinet and light provided, but MAY use equipment other than or in addition to that listed, but must provide it themselves. The equipment chosen may not alter the overall "look" of the display.
- Tank background, if any, is at the discretion of the team.
- Aquascapes must be completed between the hours of 12:00(noon)-6:00pm on Friday, November 7, 2014 and 10:00am-1:00pm on Saturday, November 8, 2014. Aquascaping has been scheduled to take place during show hours so that attendees can watch and enjoy following the works-in-progress.
- Each team will be responsible for supplying their own hardscape and plant materials. These materials may be grown out ahead of time, and brought to the site, ready to re-assemble.
- Standard pressurized CO2 canisters and adequate electrical outlets will be available for each tank. Each team should bring their own regulator and diffusion equipment of choice.
- Animals MAY be used in the tank, but it is the responsibility of the entrants to select animals appropriate for the size of the tank. Live animals are NOT a requirement of the competition.
- There will be several micron filters available for use as needed to clear tanks after set-up. These will be shared among entrants in both contests as needed.
- Contest Judging-Celebrity judges will be Oliver Knott, Oliver Lucanus, Brandon McLane, Karen Randall and Bailin Shaw. Judging will take place on the show floor from 1:00pm-4:30pm on Saturday, November 8, 2014. Winners will be announced and prize money awarded on the show floor at 5:00pm on Saturday, November 8, 2014. The first prize winning team will be our invited guest to attend the Aquatic Experience Keynote Dinner Banquet being held on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at 6:30pm. Ribbons will be displayed on the winning tanks through the end of the Show.

### **Prize Money:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	\$1,000.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	\$600.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	\$400.00

- Note-At the conclusion of the Show, the large tanks and any equipment provided by Aquatic Experience are the property of Aquatic Experience, and will be auctioned off with all proceeds going to The Coral Restoration Foundation, Pets in the Classroom, and the PIJAC Marine Defense Fund. All plants, animals, hardscape materials and equipment (including CO2 equipment) provided by the entrants belong to the entrants and may be taken down and removed by them after the close of Show at 3:00pm on Sunday, November 9, 2014. Any materials not claimed by 8:00pm on Sunday November 9, 2014 will be disposed of at the discretion of the organizers.

## Rules for Judging:

### Overall Impression – maximum 50 points

- Does the aquarium as a whole; plants, animals, (if used) and hardscape, create a positive visual impact?
- Do all parts of the aquarium work together to present a harmonious and cohesive whole?
- Do the plants and animals appear healthy?
- Hardware should be as inconspicuous as possible, and clean.
- Water should be clear.

### Composition: Balance, Use of Space, Use of Color – maximum 60 points

- Is the aquascape laid out well?
- Does the aquarist make good use of differences in color, leaf size and shape, and height (growth habit or trimming) to maximize contrast between groups of plants?
- Does the aquarist use the space effectively, balancing planted areas and negative space?
- Do the species and planting enhance or detract from the sense of depth and scale?

### Selection & Use of Plants, Hardscape Materials, and Animals – maximum 50 points

- Has the aquarist selected plants appropriately?
- Do the colors, shape, and size of the fish or other animals, if used, harmonize with the plants? Are schooling fish present in sufficient numbers to make a suitable school?
- Are hardscape materials well chosen for character, size and form? Is the hardscape well balanced and in proper scale for the aquascape?

### Viability of Aquascape – maximum 40 points

- With appropriate grooming and maintenance, would the plants selected be suitable for use in the aquarium if maintained as-is for a long period?
- If visible, are the fish and other animals likely to be too large for the aquarium, cause damage to the aquascape, or each other at adult size?
- Please note-Due to the short-term nature of this competition, lack of animals in a tank will NOT be a deduction, although use of appropriate animals, could enhance an aquascape. It is up to the entrants to decide whether or not to use animals in the display, keeping in mind the nature of the competition. Deductions WILL be made for unhealthy animals.

## Celebrity Aquascaping Judges

- Oliver Knott- AquaDesign Consulting Co. Knott's history in the field started at age 16 at a small pet stores selling parrots, rabbits, fish and snakes. After several years working in retail stores throughout Germany, Knott decided to launch his own company specializing in creating aquarium tanks for private customers, small businesses and other pet stores. His knowledge

has been cultivated through years of experience working closely with aquatic industry companies and a life-long love of all things aquaria.

- Oliver Lucanus- Oliver Lucanus has built a career around his fascination with natural world and life under water. In the last 25 years he has travelled extensively on all continents with special emphasis on South America and Africa, photographing and collecting fishes. He has lectured and written extensively about fishes and their habitats, with an emphasis to bring information on the home of our fishes to aquarists. Seeking to answer the essential questions: How do we learn from the natural habitats to improve the artificial home we make for our fish? What factors present in nature are absent in the aquarium, and what effect does this have on keeping fish? His articles and photos have been published in magazines and books worldwide. "The Amazon Below Water" is his latest book showing more than 150 species of fish in their natural habitats.
- Brandon McLane-Vice President of Florida Aquatic Nurseries, Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, one of the largest producers of aquatic plants in the United States. Brandon has been with Florida Aquatic Nurseries since 2006. Brandon attended the University of Florida where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree with a specialization in Landscape and Nursery Management in 2003. He also studied micro propagation under Dr. Michael Kane. Brandon has written several articles on aquatic plants and provided information and photographs for many others. He is a member of the Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association and Florida Nursery and Growers and Landscapers Association, and is on the board of directors for the Florida Aquaculture Association and the International Waterlily and Water Garden Society. Brandon has traveled extensively throughout the world visiting remote areas of Thailand as well as Central America and Europe. World travel affords Brandon the opportunity to share information with other aquatic plant growers and to search for new varieties to propagate.
- Karen Randall-Karen Randall is an experienced aquarist, with a concentration on aquatic plants and aquascaping. Her articles and photography have been published in six languages in nine countries. For many years she authored the monthly column, "Sunken Gardens" in Aquarium Fish Magazine. She is an international speaker on aquarium subjects. Karen serves on the board of the Aquatic Gardeners Association. She is Technical Editor of The Aquatic Gardener magazine. She has served as a judge for both the AGA International Aquascaping Contest and the Aqua Design Amano International Aquatic Plants Layout Contest since their inception. She has also served as a consultant on several major projects at public aquaria. She has traveled to South and Central America and most recently Thailand, to study and photograph aquatic plants and biotopes in the wild.
- Bailin Shaw-Bailin Shaw has been an aquarist for over 35 years getting his start in the hobby when he first received an aquarium as a child for Christmas. He began keeping planted aquariums in 1997 and has been promoting planted tanks since that time. Bailin has served as the president for various clubs including the Oklahoma City Aquarium Association, the Dallas-Fort Worth Aquatic Plant Club, the New England Aquatic Plant Society and currently serves as an executive member and aquascaping contest chair for the Aquatic Gardeners Association. Before taking on the role of contest chair, he served as a judge for the AGA aquascaping contest. In addition to advancing aquascaping principles in order to expand this area of the hobby, he has been a strong proponent of responsible aquatic husbandry and ecological conservation. He currently maintains three planted tanks in his home and is looking for space for another.