

## Ornamental Fish Farming

Tank-bred broodstock should be sourced as wild-caught fish are far more difficult to induce to spawn.

**Spawning facility:** a glass tank of 600 x 300 x 300 mm (24 x 12 x 12 in) divided into two sections can be used to spawn two groups. **Water:** soft – preferably less than 30 ppm, with a pH of around 7.0. **Temperature:** 24° to 27°C (75° to 81°F). They prefer the higher end of this range and the eggs are tolerant of the higher temperature. **Depth:** at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  in the described set-up. Strangely, the blue strain of harlequin rasbora is slightly more inclined to jump than the normal strain and should be covered during spawning. **Aeration:** gentle.

A light to medium concentration of **peat extract** is recommended. **Spawn robbing:** if breeders are left overnight after spawning, eggs adhering to the plastic plants appear to decline in number to some extent. Furthermore, because some eggs do fall to the bottom, it is safer to use an egg-screen as well as removing breeders after spawning. **Spawning medium and tank-layout:** broad-leafed homemade plastic plants, loosely filling most of the tank.

**Identifying the sexes:** males are slightly longer, slender, and darker in colour than females.

Females are plumper when ripe, but slightly broader even when out of condition. They are noticeably paler. **Grouping:** 3 males to 3 females; that is, a group of 6 fish in each of the two sections. (See FIG 4.14.) They can also be spawned with 4 pairs in each section, but results may be somewhat less dependable. **Introduction time:** they are best introduced in the mid-afternoon to avoid precocious spawning. (They will sometimes spawn on the same day if introduced too early, with just a few females participating. In this case spawning by the other females on the following day is unlikely.)

**Spawning:** this is a lively affair with chasing commencing early on the morning following introduction. Males attempt to position themselves just above the females. Repeatedly, females seek a suitable spawning site and position themselves, often upside down, under the spawning medium, awaiting a male. Sometimes a male will find them and move in successfully alongside where, with some trembling, a few adhesive eggs are deposited. Often the female waits for some moments for a male, then moves off and repeats the process. This can go on for hours, with chasing continuing into the afternoon. It is difficult to say exactly when spawning finishes altogether, but as some egg eating may commence when spawning fervour



FIG 4.14. Two groups of harlequin rasboras set up to spawn in a divided tank as described.