

PRODUCT REVIEW

By Sandy Cohen

THE NURCE

Even though my home office is air-conditioned, I still keep a fan blowing over the top of my reef tank to cool the water by evaporation. It works, but there is no free lunch. Every morning I must add about a half gallon of water. Doing so has a number of disadvantages. The salinity (and every other parameter) in the aquarium fluctuates, and I have to be there to pour water in every day. If I'm away, I have to make sure someone else will do the job for me. This is not always easy.

In the past, I have set up a trickle system above the tank to let the water enter the tank more slowly, but I still have to monitor it so it won't overflow, and still have to remember to fill the reservoir once a day, or when needed, and only with enough water to top off the tank. I could set up a system with a float switch and a pump, but Murphy's Law being what it is, I know that every moving part in a system is a potential disaster. I don't like open reservoir systems under my aquarium because they always have the potential for overflowing.

The Nurce solves these problems. It allows the water to be added to a set height in the aquarium or sump, and adds the water only as it is needed at the same rate it is depleted in the aquarium system. In other words, if your system is losing, say, 1/8" of water an hour, the system will replace it at that rate. The

fastest the current model can replenish the water is 5 gallons every 30 minutes.

But, best of all, the Nurce has no moving parts, it doesn't need electricity or float switches, and it is a closed system; so, if there ever is a power outage, it can't drain the tank accidentally or spill onto the floor. The Nurce cannot back flow. Basically, the system consists of an acrylic cube 11.5" long and wide, and a little over 12.5" tall. However, if you need a larger unit, the company can make one up for you.

Two pieces of 1/2" flexible tubing fit on the top into barbed fittings (these must be pushed down all the way because the system works on air pressure). One of these tubes is connected on one end to a U-fitting that goes into the aquarium, and the other to a fitting that stays above the water and regulates the air pressure. There is a 4" cap and seal where the water is added to the system. This cap has a heavy seal to keep the correct air pressure. Once the system is primed (by blowing into the air tube and quickly placing it into the aquarium or sump water), it should never need to be primed again.

Ideally, the Nurce should be placed so that a line near the bottom of the unit is lined up with the top of the water in the aquarium or sump. It can be placed lower, but you will lose some of the reserve capacity. It can be placed higher, but if the reserve is allowed to

drain completely, the system will need to be reprimed. The system is safe and effective, but you must make sure the stand or base you place it on is sturdy enough, as the unit weighs about 60 lbs. when filled with water.

That's it. That's all you have to do. From then on, you check the water level in the unit and refill when it gets low. That's easy enough to do, as the unit is made from clear acrylic. You can add additives to the reservoir if you like and the unit will also act as a dosing pump. The unit is very well made. The only problem I had was with the instructions, which could be a bit more clear. But the manufacturer, Alan Bowling, tells me he is working on improving them as I type these words. So, you should have a better, more clear set of instructions with any unit you order.

I'm using a Nurce on my own reef tank now. I believe it will keep the temperature and salinity in my aquarium more stable and free me from my daily chore of manually topping off the water. I like the unit a lot. It is attractive and, at \$97.00 plus shipping, is a better price than a dosing pump, float switch, powerhead, etc. It is certainly more simple to operate. To keep costs and prices low, Aqualan is selling to the public directly, rather than through the large mail order houses. You can call Aqualan at: (888) 749-4942 or (408) 749-9465; check their ads here in *FAMA*, or visit their Web site at:

www.aqualan.to

The Web site lists some local distributors, and now you can order directly over the Internet with their secure line.

