Culturing Brineshrimp

ANGFA Victoria
Information Sheet 5
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Key Advantage

A key advantage of brineshrimp is that you can stop and start their production fairly rapidly.
They are a small live food that is nutritious and attractive, not only to fry, but larger fish like blue-eyes as well.

What you will need (as a minimum)

1. Brine shrimp eggs. These are imported and the initial outlay is expensive. A tin of eggs is about $100.
2. Sea water or salt water to a similar specific gravity or salinity (35 grams of cooking or sea salt per litre).
3. Two litre plastic juice bottles with screw lids, or similar (there are commercial brineshrimp hatchers).
4. Strong aeration
5. Warmth, about 25°C
6. A wide-mouthed jar of 3+ litres capacity.
7. A piece of nylon (curtain) material about 40cm square.

The process

1. Open the tin of brineshrimp eggs & decant enough for about a fortnight, say ¼ cup (depending on how much you want to feed out daily) into an airtight container. Then seal the tin and put it into the freezer.
2. I set up 3 containers to be harvested in sequence, one in the morning and one in the evening. That gives approximately a 36 hour hatching time.
3. The plastic bottles are ¾ filled with the sea water, about ⅔ of a teaspoon of eggs is added and then a strong airstone provided. Put the airline through a neat fitting hole in the lid, with a small hole drilled for escaping air. This will reduce the amount of salt water that sprays or evaporates from the bottle.
4. I tilt the bottles by putting a block under one end & the airstone at the bottom of the bottle so that all eggs are agitated.
5. The ambient temperature of a fishroom is adequate, or you could set up a small tank & float the bottles in heated water. Alternatively a bottle could be floated in the aquarium.

Harvesting

1. After about 30 hours unscrew the lid, remove the airstone & allow it to settle for about 5 minutes.
2. A reddish cloud of hopping brineshrimp should be seen in the water, usually towards the light.
3. Set up a broad-rimmed container with the nylon cloth to filter the brineshrimp.
4. Use an airline or larger plastic tube to siphon out the brineshrimp.
5. Some people rinse the naupili, but I don't find that necessary.
6. Rinse the bottle, refill it & add more eggs.
7. Devise a system to readily identify which bottle to use next, e.g. a plastic tie on the next bottle.

Maintenance

1. The water can be re-used if it is still clear, but if it develops a pinkish tinge, discard it.
2. Sometimes the water goes acidic after prolonged use: it should be discarded too.
3. Bottles can be cleaned with a dose of bleach. Rinse well after.

Further Information

Attend an ANGFA VIC meeting and ask an ANGFA member for practical tips on all sorts of live foods. Meetings held the 1st Friday every second month starting February. Or go to www.angfavic.org