

Blue Dream Shrimp - care guide

Neocaridina davidi

The same species as a Red Cherry, selectively bred to a deep opaque blue. Just as hardy and just as easy - the difficulty is in keeping the colour true across generations, not in keeping the shrimp alive.

At a glance

Difficulty: Beginner

Adult size: 2-3cm

Lifespan: 1-2 years

Water parameters

Temperature: 20-24°C

pH: 6.8-7.6

GH: 6-12

KH: 2-8

TDS: 150-250

These are the ranges to aim for, not the extremes they can survive. Shrimp are far more sensitive to sudden change than to imperfect conditions - stability matters more than hitting an exact number.

Keeping them

Blue Dream Shrimp are **Neocaridina davidi** - genetically the same animal as a Red Cherry Shrimp, selectively bred along a different colour line. Everything about their care is identical, and if you have kept Cherries successfully you already know how to keep these.

They are a good second colony, and a poor addition to an existing one. *Neocaridina* colour lines interbreed freely, and the offspring revert toward wild-type brown. A Blue Dream colony sharing a tank with Red Cherries will, within a few generations, produce neither - just increasingly drab shrimp with occasional flashes of either parent. Keep colour lines in separate tanks, without exception.

A 20-litre planted tank, gentle sponge filtration, and stable water is the whole recipe. They are as forgiving as any shrimp in the hobby.

Water

Identical to Red Cherry Shrimp - see that guide's water section for the full reasoning, which applies here unchanged.

In brief: GH 6-12 is the important one (it is a moulting requirement, not a preference), keep some KH for buffering, avoid copper entirely, and drip acclimatise over 2-3 hours on arrival.

Stability over perfection. A steady, slightly-off parameter is dramatically safer than a rapid correction toward an ideal one.

Feeding

As Red Cherry Shrimp: biofilm grazers, supplemented two or three times a week with a purpose-made shrimp food and the occasional blanched courgette or spinach leaf.

Feed sparingly. Overfeeding is the leading cause of the water-quality crashes that kill beginner colonies, and it drives the planaria and hydra blooms that follow.

There is a persistent belief that specific foods deepen blue colouration. Diet supports condition and therefore colour intensity, but it cannot change the genetics - a low-grade blue will not become a high-grade one on better food. Colour depth comes from breeding stock and consistent culling.

Telling males from females

Identical to Red Cherry Shrimp - same species, same markers. Saddle first, then the deep curved belly, then size.

One thing that is genuinely harder here: the saddle is less visible on blue lines. On a Cherry the yellowish ovaries show clearly through a red body; on a dark Blue Dream there is much less contrast, and on a deep Carbon Rili it can be almost invisible. Body shape carries more of the work than it does with reds, which means blue lines are effectively harder to sex young.

Backlighting helps - a torch behind the tank, or catching one against a bright background, will often show a saddle that's invisible against the substrate.

Breeding

Straightforward and unassisted, exactly as Red Cherry Shrimp - berried females, roughly 20-30 eggs, three to four weeks to hatch, no larval stage, shrimplets independent from birth.

The work with Blue Dreams is not getting them to breed. It is keeping the line true.

Blue is recessive and unstable in *Neocaridina*. Left to itself, a colony throws paler offspring, some near-clear, some brownish. Maintaining a strong blue line means culling - removing the weakest-coloured individuals from the breeding population each generation. Most hobbyists rehome culls rather than destroy them, and there is a reasonable market for lower-grade blues.

If you are not prepared to cull, expect your colony's colour to soften noticeably within a year. That is not a failure of care; it is simply what genetics do without selection pressure.

Tank mates

Neocaridina are prey animals and behave like it. They do best either in a species-only tank or with fish too small and too peaceful to treat them as food.

Safe: otocinclus, pygmy corydoras, ember tetras, chili rasboras, nerite and ramshorn snails, and other dwarf shrimp of the same genus.

Risky: most tetras and rasboras above about 4cm will take shrimplets even if they leave adults alone. You will keep a colony, but you will rarely see it grow.

Not safe: angelfish, gouramis, cichlids of any size, bettas (individual temperament varies, but the odds are poor), loaches, and anything described as a "community fish" that reaches 8cm or more.

A heavily planted tank changes these odds considerably - moss, floating plants and leaf litter give shrimplets somewhere to be invisible for the two weeks that matter most.

Common problems

All of the Red Cherry Shrimp issues apply unchanged - moulting failures from low GH, parameter-swing deaths after large water changes, copper sensitivity, planaria from overfeeding. See that guide for the detail.

Two that are more prominent in blue lines specifically:

Fading or patchy colour across generations. Expected without culling, as above. It is genetic drift, not illness.

Shrimp that look almost transparent. Blue Dreams show stress-paling more visibly than reds do, because there is less pigment to fall back on. A newly arrived batch often looks disappointingly washed out for the first 48 hours and then colours up substantially. Judge a purchase after a week in your tank, not on arrival day.

Grades & buying

Blue *Neocaridina* are sold under several overlapping names, and the boundaries between them are genuinely unclear across sellers.

Blue Dream (also Blue Velvet) is the deep, opaque, whole-body blue most buyers are after. Blue Jelly is a lighter, more translucent blue. Blue Rili carries blue on the head and tail with a clear midsection. Carbon Rili

and Black Rose are darker lines that sit near-black.

The names are not policed by anyone, so a "Blue Dream" from one seller can be visibly lighter than another's. As with reds: trust the photographs of the actual animals over the grade name, and prefer sellers who photograph their own colony rather than using stock images.

Depth of blue also shifts with substrate and stress - the same shrimp looks darker over black sand than over pale gravel. Worth remembering when a delivery looks lighter than the listing photo.

In the wild

Genetically identical to Red Cherry Shrimp - the same **Neocaridina davidi**, from the same range across Taiwan, southern China, Korea and northern Vietnam, in the same slow, hard, vegetation-choked streams.

There is no blue shrimp in the wild. Wild **N. davidi** is mottled brown-green, and blue is a selectively bred trait that would be conspicuous to every predator in a Taiwanese stream. That's not a curiosity - it's the direct reason blue lines are unstable in the hobby. Nothing in the animal's evolutionary history has been maintaining that colour, so without a breeder culling for it every generation, the colony drifts back toward camouflage.

Everything in the Red Cherry Shrimp guide's habitat section applies here unchanged, including the temperate range that explains why room temperature suits them better than a heated tropical tank.

How it reached the hobby

Blue **Neocaridina** lines emerged from the same selective-breeding programmes that produced the reds, but later - the reds were established in the hobby first, and blue variants became widely available through the 2000s and 2010s.

Attribution here is genuinely poor. Blue Dream, Blue Velvet, Blue Jelly and Carbon Rili are all sold as distinct lines, the names are used inconsistently between sellers, and the origin of each is credited to different breeders depending on which forum thread you read. Blue Dream is commonly said to have been developed from Chocolate/Carbon stock - that account is plausible and widely repeated, and it has no primary source anyone can point to.

What can be said confidently: they are **N. davidi**, they were produced by the same culling-based selective breeding as every other colour line, they interbreed freely with all of them, and the offspring of a mixed colony revert toward wild-type brown. The rest is hobby oral history, and worth treating as such.

Care advice is general guidance - if something in your tank disagrees with this guide, trust your own water tests. Read the latest version at shrimpbay.shop/species/blue-dream-shrimp