

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
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EXTENSION
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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Notes: Get details on the "Fishy Science" project book, which is best for teachers and 4-H advisors who work with children in grades 3-5, at <http://estore.osu-extension.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=2121>. Find Loaches Online at <http://www.loaches.com/>. "(Clown loaches) are regarded as a poor choice for the beginner aquarist despite their wide availability in fish shops," the Web site notes. "Chromobotia" is the clown loach's genus; it means "color warrior." A clown loach can make its bright colors look washed out, and can do it quickly. Loaches Online calls this "graying out." It happens during squabbles and is normal. Props to Satchel Pooch.

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Q. Dear Twig: What's a clown loach?

A.: A **freshwater fish** from **Indonesia** that people keep in fish tanks sometimes. The "clown" part of the name comes from the fish's colorful colors. Its body is **goldish, orange-ish, yellowish** or all three-ish, with three big **blackish** bands ringed around it. One band looks like a mask on the face. The tail and some of the fins are bright **reddish**.

So: Clowny, eh? Eh? OK, kind of.

Clowny, too, is how the clown loach sometimes acts in a fish tank. Loaches Online, a Web site packed with loachy goodness, says groups of clown loaches sometimes do "**loach-dancing**." And sometimes one will fall asleep in a funny way or place, like floating upside down. ("Hello, Polly Clown Loach! This is your nine o'clock alarm call! [tap tap tap ...]")

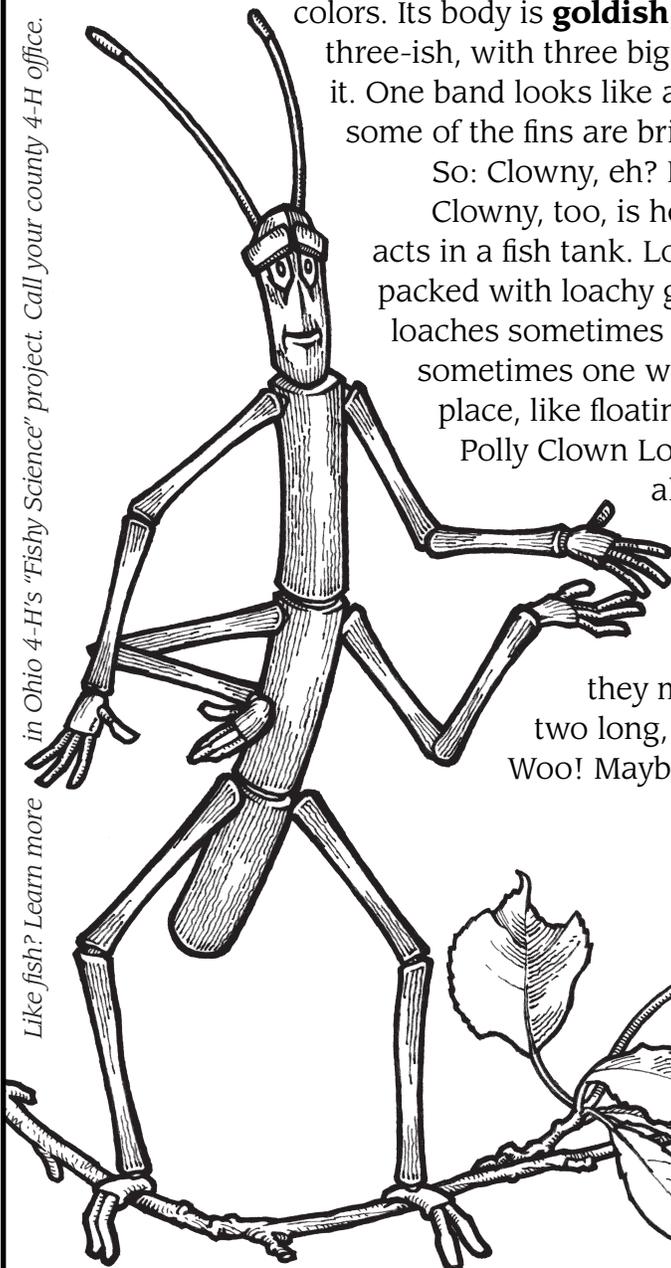
They're not a good fish for beginners, however. They need a big tank. They do best with other clown loaches. And

they might start small, an inch or two long, but some get as big as a shoe. Woo! Maybe even a clown shoe! Yes.

Chromobotiacally,

Twig

Like fish? Learn more in Ohio 4-H's "Fishy Science" project. Call your county 4-H office.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).