

Cloudy Nights Telescope Reviews

Aquarium Review lab report



Whisper Micro Power Filter

by Allister St. Claire [click to email author](#)

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Whisper Micro Filter	\$12.00
Bio-Bags	\$1.00

Meet the Whisper Micro Filter

Whisper has been making hang-on-the-tank filters for a very long time. Twenty years ago, when I entered the aquarium hobby, everyone was using a Whisper Power Filter. A Whisper Air Pump was used to run the under gravel filter, and a Whisper Power Filter to deal with the mechanical and chemical filtration. This combination was very popular and effective at the time -- and that this unit is still being sold twenty years later means they've done something right. The Whisper Power Filter has held its own both on the price points and on the technology points, making it a staple equipment item for beginners and veterans alike.

The Whisper Micro Power Filter is aimed at the very small tank market (2-10 gallon aquariums). A typical small tank owner will choose an under gravel filter plate and an air pump to perform biological filtration. Over time, this owner will notice such a simple system doesn't do a great job at clearing the water of debris and possibly of smell. Since most hang-on-the-tank filters are rated for 10 gallons and larger, the power filter choices are limited. For such an owner, the Whisper Micro Filter is a perfect and inexpensive solution.



White Bio-bag

Filtration occurs via the following process:

1. Water is sucked into the **bottom** of the filter and moves upwards
2. Water then flows through the white Bio-Bag which is filled partially with activated carbon and spills back out into the tank.

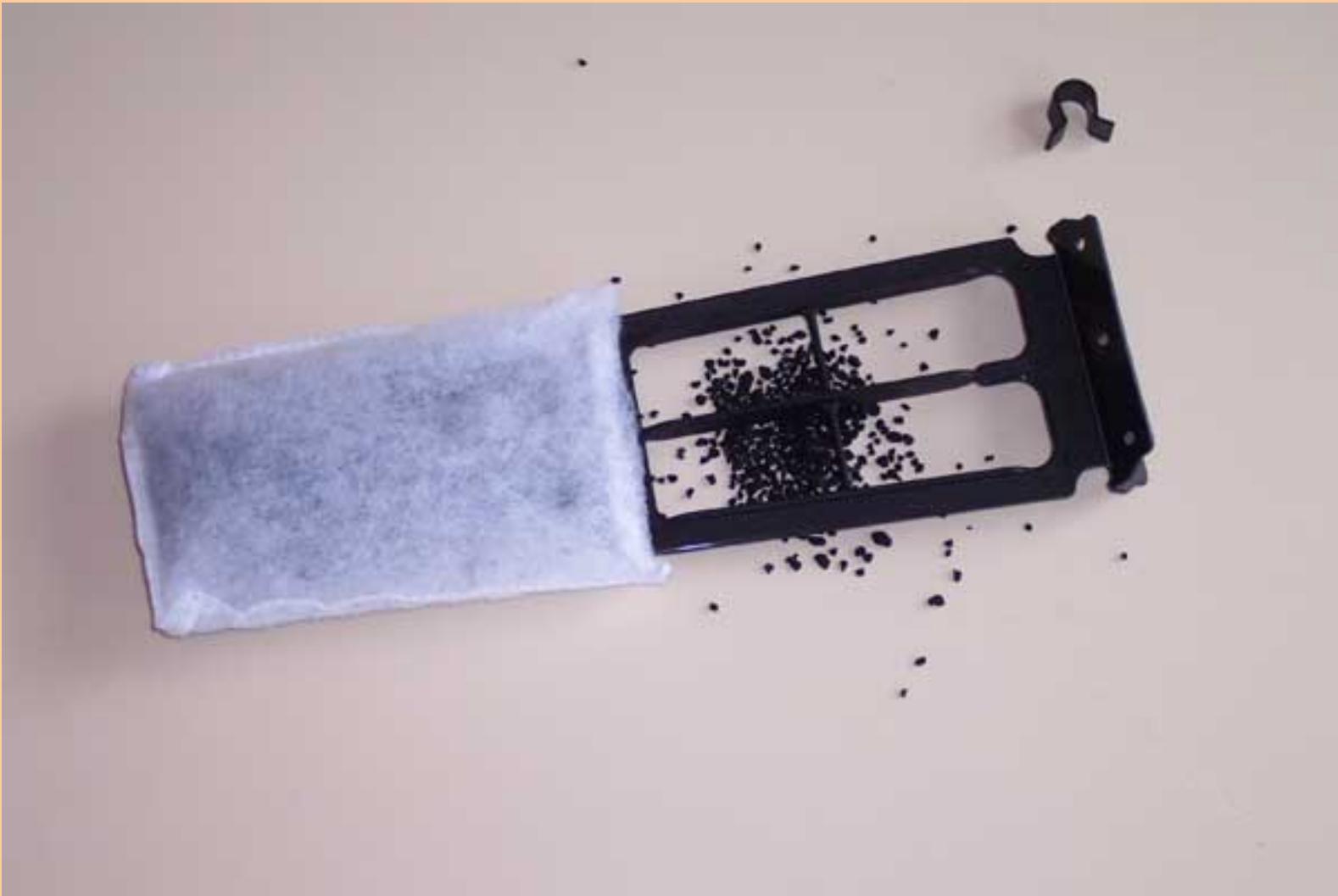


Tank clip (top), bottom suction cup. A 2nd suction cup can replace the tank clip

Attaching to the tank or bowl aquarium

Unlike other power filters, the Whisper Micro sits *inside* the aquarium. Whisper has proved two methods of attaching it in an aquarium or bowl. The owner can either attach it via the filter hanger clip to the lip of the tank, or use two suction cups to attach it to the inside of the aquarium. Both methods are sturdy -- my micro filter never slipped off or even moved.

The ability to use either the tank clip or suction cups means that owners of odd-sized aquariums can also use this filter. For example, if the owner has a large bowl aquarium the suction cups will work fine. Not being restricted to hang on the lip of the tank, gives the Whisper Micro an advantage over all other power filters.



Slip the plastic structure into the Bio-Bag, fill with carbon, and clip shut

Mechanical and Chemical Filtration

The Whisper uses a white, woolly bag as the mechanical filter. Into the open end of the bag you insert the rectangular plastic structure, fill with carbon and then clip shut. Unlike other changeable media on the market, Bio-Bags must be assembled per the instructions above. Each unit comes with :

1. Plastic Structure
2. White Bio-Bag
3. Packet of Activated Carbon

The woolly floss bag does a fine job of removing solid waste from any tank. In fact, it does such a good job of trapping debris that it needs to be changed more often than other mechanical filters. Two weeks is about the maximum to let the Bio-Bag go before changing, in my environment. Even with these frequent changes, this should not stretch your budget. Whisper Bio-Bags are among the least expensive of changeable media on the market. A 12-pack of Bio-Bags (including the carbon) costs a mere \$10.00.

Tetra recommends the reuse of the plastic structure each time you change the Bio-Bag and carbon. Each structure is etched which provides a home for the good bacteria. While the Whisper Micro filter is not meant to include biological filtration, it is a convenient and inexpensive supplement to an existing solution.

Chemical filtration works fine for a small aquarium. Since the water flows up from the bottom of the filter, it flows through the carbon which tends to clump at the bottom of the bag. The owner has the ability to buy additional carbon and fill the bag up to the top. The carbon which is included with the filter bag fills the bag to about one-third full. If the owner has a smelly or polluted tank, adding additional carbon is advised.

The owner can fill the Bio-Bag with any of the media or resins which are on the market. I feel it's imperative that the aquarium owners have the ability to use specialized media when they need it (i.e. phosphate-removing resins for algae blooms, peat for softening the water, nitrate resins for sensitive species, copper removal resins for post medication). The list goes on and on. If you are contemplating owning a filter that does not allow you to use optional media - think carefully before proceeding.

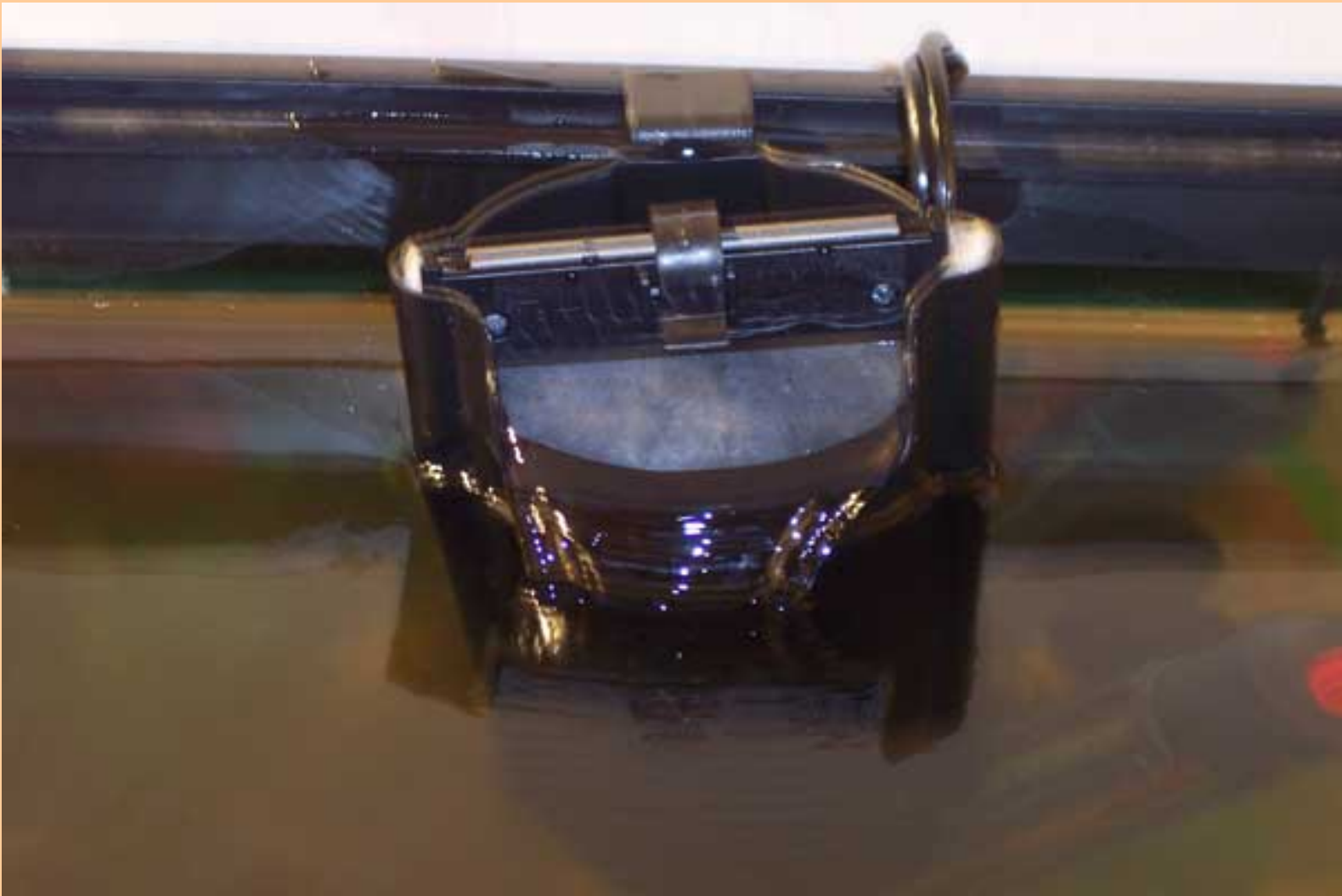


Arrow points to the flow control lever

Flow Control

The Whisper Micro Filter has a flow-control lever on the back bottom of the unit. While flow control is an excellent idea, the placement makes it nearly impossible to reach and adjust. The suction cup on the bottom pushes the lever flat against the back of the tank. This means you cannot adjust it once the filter is placed in your tank.

Flow control is important for when you feed your fish. Without flow control, your filter continues to run at full blast while you have fish food floating in the water. It's desirable to be able to turn down the rate of flow of the filter avoiding the problem of your food being sucked into it during feeding time. This not only saves on food but also saves on the frequency you will need to change the filter material.



Whisper Micro filter in action

Noise Level

As you may have guessed by its name, this filter is quiet. The only sound the Whisper Micro makes is the sound of the water flowing back into the aquarium. If the water level is close to the lip of the spillway, no sound is heard in the room. If this water level drops, the owner hears a mini waterfall sound. All in all, a

very quiet filter.

Monthly Cost

One very important variable to consider is the cost to run the filter each month. It's best to know this cost before buying the filter. Changing the Bio-Bag filters every 2 weeks will insure a healthy tank. You can stretch this into 3 weeks if you have fewer fish in your tank. If you buy the Bio-Bags in a box of 12, this is the cheapest filter I know to run on a monthly cost basis. The cost is slightly higher if you choose to buy the bags in smaller quantities.

Media	Recommended change	Monthly Cost
Bio-Bags	every 2 weeks	\$2.00

Conclusion

The Whisper Micro Filter is an inexpensive and perfectly sound filter for very small tank owners looking to add mechanical and chemical filtration to their tank or bowl. The unit is quiet, the media inexpensive, the maintenance easy and clean. This filter can be placed inside any aquarium or bowl, even those that have odd shapes.

There are a few downsides. No biological filtration is possible with this filter, and tank owners must have some sort of biological filtration occurring in their tanks (typically this consists of an under gravel plate with air stones). The flow control lever is rendered nearly useless by its odd placement, and so most owners will either not use it or simple turn the filter off during feeding times.

Whisper produces popular and effective filters. It's an inexpensive yet elegant filtration solution for small tank owners, a group often ignored by manufacturers. Its longevity is its real recommendation -- twenty years later, aquarium hobbyists are still buying Whisper filters, despite technology "advances", while other manufacturers have come and gone.

Pros	Cons
Media is inexpensive	Flow control lever is impossible to get at once installed
Ability to use any chemical media you choose	No biological filtration
Filter itself is inexpensive	
Maintenance is a snap	

