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November, 2020

By the Pond

Hello fellow koi-crazed friends!

Wahooo! Fall and cool weather are here!

Just a reminder about our upcoming special Zoom meeting - the first ever AKC "Charcuterie Social", 15 November @ 3PM. A shout-out to Melanie Onushko for coming up with this idea!

Although we're amending the details with some good news! We'll be awarding free raffles. You have to join via Zoom to win! Please join us for some fun and free gifts.

A special congratulations to President-elect Diane Giangrande, Secretary-elect Kim Munie and Equipment Manager-elect Marlon Tiller. Thank you for your volunteer spirit in helping the AKC to continue moving forward.

Stay safe, healthy, and watch out for the blue herons disguising themselves as blue birds...or raccoons disguising themselves as the neighbor's cat. Well, that's what I've heard anyway...

Best wishes,

Kevin

Your AKC VP

Congratulations to the new Atlanta Koi Club Officers for the years 2021 and 2022!

President: Diane Giangrande

Secretary: Kim Munie

Equipment Manager: Marlon Tiller

The full board also includes Kevin McDonough, Vice President and Angie Jones, Treasurer

Thanks to the outgoing officers Chad Bishop, Cheryl Jacobs and Alan Puch for everything they've done to help the club the past 2 years.

The current officers will spend Nov. and Dec. transitioning work in progress to the new board. We look forward to an exciting 2021!

See you on the next zoom!

Melanie Onushko

MEMBERSHIP Melanie Onushko

Well, this crazy year has almost come to an end! I hope you can all zoom in for one last meeting on Sunday, November 15th at 3pm.

We will have some “free” raffles! See different peoples ponds and have a remote social gathering for the last time this year with your fish friends.

New people, please join in and introduce yourselves. We’re sad we haven’t gotten a chance to know you, but we look forward to meeting you in person next year!

Please make sure to visit our sponsors for all their end of season sales!

Coastal Pond Supply, Atlanta Water Gardens, Kol Koi Pondscapes, Splendor Koi & Ponds, Randy’s Perennials & Water Gardens, The Koi Store, Neptune Aquascapes, T&T Uniforms South, and Mosquito Curtains.

Dues notices will come out in mid December. Payments will be due by the end of January in order for you to get 75% of your sales at the April, Koi auction. Only those receiving notices owe money for 2021.



WINTER NOTES

Your koi have probably slowed their eating because of water temps. Their metabolism is dropping and digestion is slowed. If you haven’t cut back on the frequency and amount of food you are feeding, now is a good time to do this. As the water hits 50 degrees, some people stop feeding altogether. Others just feed a little during warm stretches, if the koi are active. If you have algae in the pond, you’ll see them picking at this as they settle to the bottom of the pond for the winter.

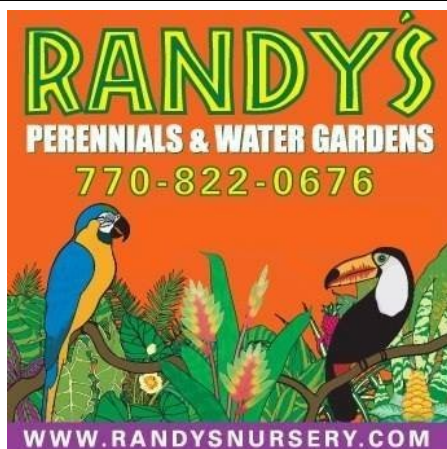
Make sure you keep up with your water changes this winter and keep your KH up. The koi still put off ammonia. The cleaner everything is in the spring, the less likely you are to have problems. If you haven’t cleaned out and netted your pond for the winter, now is a good time to do that. Keep filters running through the winter. The water flow helps keep ponds from freezing. If we have 3 or more days of below freezing temps, be aware that a waterfall can quickly drop your pond temps. It might be best to bypass it at this point and just have the water flow directly back into the pond.

HOW TO BUY FROM JAPAN

The big Japan pond pulls are happening now. Dealers are scrambling to get hold of the best 2 and 3 year olds coming out of the mud. You can see updates on the Atlanta Koi Club FB page, by following our local Dealer, The Koi Store. They will post pictures of what they have coming. You will want to PM them quickly to get a price and make a decision on purchasing. Don’t be afraid to ask the price. If the one you’re looking at is out of your price range, there’s a good chance Carl can find one that fits in your price range. It is always first come, first served. Koi generally don’t arrive until February or March. You also have the option of leaving them in Japan in Azukari. This means they keep them in mud for another year to grow them bigger. You also have the option of entering them in the Japan Koi Shows, while they are there.

Please remember our Sponsors:

Randy's Perennials, Splendor Koi and Pond, Koi Koi Pondscapes, Coastal Pond Supply, Atlanta Water Gardens, T&T Uniforms, The Koi Store, Neptune Aquascapes, and Mosquito Curtains



We Offer DIY Advice & Contractor Referrals For:

- *Liner and Concrete Ponds
- *Repairs or Expansions
- *Fish
- *Water Plants
- *Pumps / Bead Filters / Skimmers
- *Pondless Waterfalls and Lighting
- *Water Treatments (Clarity)
- *Fish Meds



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Some Wintertime Koi Management Considerations

Winterizing Koi and Wintertime Koi Care – by Doc Johnson

Winter is the time of year that we consider our Koi as being “dead asleep” and we do not worry too much about them because water temperatures are so cool that parasites and bacteria are almost as dormant as the fish themselves.

Indeed, this is an important time of year because what you do (or do **not** do now) sets the stage for your springtime season in March, April and May, which traditionally marks the “Disease Season”.

There are several considerations for this time of year, which I will address individually.

At this time of year, we should examine the

- 1-water quality,
- 2-the ponds’ cleanliness, the concept of
- 3-springtime feeding,
- 4-disease prevention and finally,
- 5-minimizing fish stress during pond start-up.

Water Quality at this time of year is usually very good. ***Cold water carries much more oxygen than warmer water does.*** Even with the filters off, oxygen tensions remain high, and very satisfactory for fish. Partially because their metabolism is so slow!

Ammonia can still be a problem in some ponds if the owner is feeding every warm day they get. I saw another pond that was made with a liner which was installed and seamed in two parts, and was positioned over some Septic tank field lines. The ammonia-rich ground water would sneak up through the seam in the liner, giving the owner a nice 2ppm Ammonia reading, even in the dead of winter! Ammonia testing is very satisfactory in the winter, if you would only *****warm***** the water in your hand to at least room temperature before testing it. You see, the reagents give falsely low readings in cold water.

Nitrites should not be a problem because Nitrosomonas is very sensitive and will be inactive in the winter-time. If you **freeze** these bacteria in a block of ice, they will be killed, but if you merely chill them to near freezing they will remain in a state of suspended animation until conditions return to more suitable temperatures.

pH is never a sure bet unless your pond is concrete lined, in which case it’s a sure bet that the pH will be high.....Still, for those reasons that apply in the summer, periodic checking of the pH will avoid a “crash” in the pH, which can kill fish.

One other area of water quality for your consideration is the formation of Ice on your pond, which will trap gases and other toxins underneath to the detriment of your fish. It has been said that Ice can be permitted to form for a few days without hazard, and I substantially agree. But there is a period which is “too long”.

Folks who have left their traditional backyard ponds covered with ice for weeks have lost entire collections of fish. It’s hard to believe that there could be that much gas formation in the dead of winter, but the proof is in the experiences of hundreds of people every winter.

They reason that in nature, ponds freeze over. However, they do not realize that natural ponds are usually larger, less crowded, and may have inflow of springwater or stream feeds.

I urge you to keep a place in the ice clear for gas exchange and observation of the fish. Cattle water trough heaters (caged heaters) are cheap (about 30-50\$) and can keep a patch of ice clear all winter for a

small investment in electricity. Air blowers and stones may fail to keep ice from forming, in the harsh Northeastern climes. I have seen a regular stalagmite of ice form over the air-cap there, and the benefit is then lost.

You can break the ice with a concussive blow, in the event that you are caught unprepared and you find your pond frozen. The blow to the ice was once supposedly transmitted through the water and would shock and possibly deafen your fish, ruining their appreciation of music. I wouldn't worry too much about deafening the fish, this ice-whack-and-shock-phenomena has not been seen in real life by me. I have tested the "theory" almost ten times under various circumstance of needing emergency access to fish under ice.

A hot teakettle, set directly on the ice. Some folks use coffee heaters, but I wonder if they heater could melt through and fall in?

We always have snakes around my pond, except in the winter. Where do they go? from ThePondGuy

A: Ponds and lakes get plenty of visitors – including different species of snakes that linger around water. Some of the more common varieties that call the northern states home include the Black Rat Snake, Corn Snake, Garter Snake and the Northern Water Snake.

Water snakes live wherever there's water, like near lakes, ponds, marshes, streams, rivers and canals. During the spring, summer and fall, when the weather is warm, you probably see these snakes slithering in and around your pond and in the grassy fields, looking for food and for places to sun themselves. But during the winter, they disappear. Where do they go? They're holed up and hibernating.

Summer Home, Winter Home

Snakes are ectothermic, which means they use the environment to regulate their body temperature. When it's warm, they're warm – and they ensure that by basking on rocks, stumps or brush in the full sunshine. In fair weather, rocks, aquatic plants, muskrat houses and beaver lodges are good places to find water snakes, which like to hide among the sticks and plant stems when they're not sunning themselves.

But when it's cold, they go on hiatus. These snakes are unable to generate their own internal body heat, so they rely on outside forces to keep their metabolisms churning. They need to overwinter in areas that will not freeze. The underground becomes their winter home, where they spend their time in temperature-stable burrows below the freezing line, and often share the space with other snakes.

Preferred Diet

In the spring, summer and fall, these slithering, mostly harmless critters are active day and night. During the day, water snakes hunt among plants at the water's edge, looking for small fish, frogs, worms, leeches, crayfish, salamanders, young turtles, and small birds and mammals. At night, they concentrate on minnows and other small fish sleeping in shallow water.

When the cold weather sets in; however, snakes go on a season-long diet. Their metabolism slows way down. Food supplies, like frogs and toads, dwindle. If snakes have undigested food in their bellies when they go into hibernation, they can die.

Friends and Foes

Water snakes have many predators, including birds, raccoons, opossums, foxes, snapping turtles, bullfrogs and other snakes. Humans who mistake the harmless snake varieties for dangerous ones, like Copperheads and Water Moccasins, can affect the population, too.

For the most part, these guys are our friends. They may eat some fish and frogs and hunt some of the indigenous wildlife, but they also do damage to the rodent population – which everyone can appreciate. If you see a snake on your property and you're not sure if it's a safe or dangerous variety, contact your local university extension office and describe the snake's size, color, scale pattern and where you found it. Never kill a snake without good reason, because they are important to our environment.

Be a Good Observer – Prevention is better than curing!

In nature, fish (like all animals) are adapted to move with a minimum of effort through their environment without attracting a lot of attention and predators.

So let's look at a healthy fishes characteristics; a healthy fish will swim (with a few exceptions) in a clean, normal manner. Jerks, twitches, and shimmies are not normal manner. Its movements will be smooth, flowing and uninterrupted.

Eyes will be clear, not red, bulging or swollen, fins will be extended and open. Clamped fins means disease. A healthy fish will not have random bumps, open wounds, sores or any sort of cloudy or discoloration anywhere on its body. Neither will anything noticeable be hanging off it. Again there are a few exceptions to these parameters, but these exceptions are few.

A healthy fish will open and close its mouth and gills to breath in a constant slow motion. Rapid breathing indicates disease. A fish that behaves or acts different is always ill.

Watch your fish eat. A fish in a store that does not eat surely has a problem, same as ones in your home that do not eat. A fish that eats but spits all its food out is likely to be on its way to being ill, if it is not already ill. Just like you, an inability on the part of your fish to eat indicates a problem.

Normal fish do not itch or scratch except very rarely. This motion is called "flashing". It is generally indicative of a skin related disease. The fish scratching is trying to remove a parasite or bacteria.

Normal healthy fish never have any sort of fuzzy growth or cottony type puffs anywhere on its fins. Much less on its body. The scales of most fish are usually smooth and interlock fairly well. Scales do not stand out on end to give a rough appearance...ever! Nor should any scales be missing. Missing scales at best open a pathways into the fish for various diseases and at worst mean an opportunistic disease is already underway.

Look at the fish head on, between the eyes, at what is essentially its forehead. This area should never appear pinched or thin. It should be broad and full. Look too at a fishes belly, it should never be pinched or worse sunken in. Both of these areas, if thin, pinched or sunken, indicates a starving fish and certainly one that is very prone to disease, if it is not already ill.

A healthy fish will not have raised white or yellow spots anywhere on it. Look closely at the fishes fin edges too! They should not appear to be deteriorating and have a ragged white edge.

Your fish will tell you if it's sick. All you have to do is look closely!

By: Anthony Kroeger, Brooklyn Aquarium Society Newsletter Aquatica, Sept-Oct 2017