



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

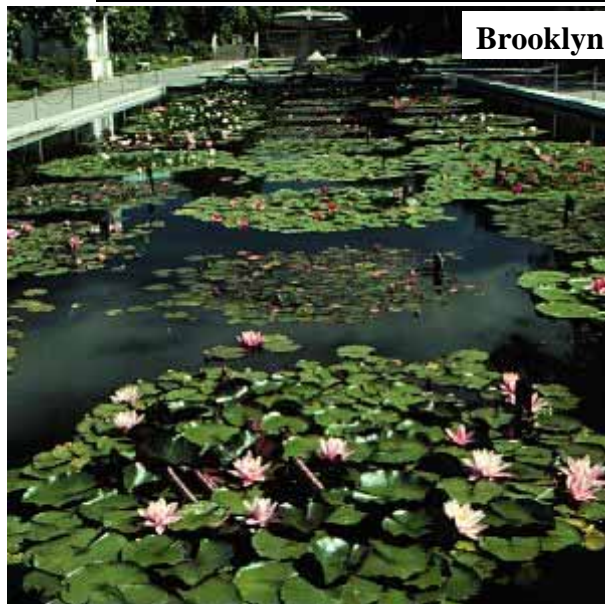
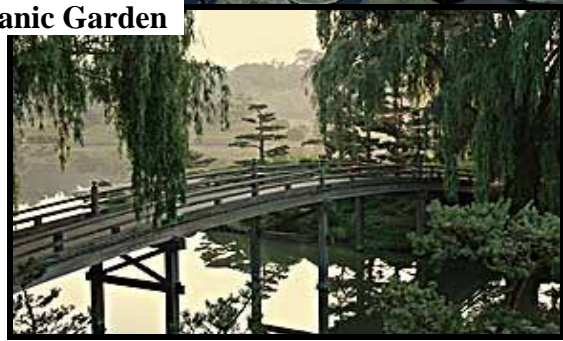
Volume 11 Issue 4

April, 2007

Public Water Gardens Across the USA



Chicago Botanic Garden



Brooklyn Botanic Garden



See last page for more information on these water gardens.



The Oregon Garden



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

"Wet -n- Dry" "News -n- Views"

Last Month

I obviously got carried away last month when I talked about spring being just around the corner. We discussed the fact that some of us were already able to see and enjoy the sight of our fish swimming in the open water of the bubbler or aeration openings. Unfortunately, Mother Nature saw it differently. A few days later, the winds changed, the open water shrank in size and everything was then blanketed under a couple more inches of snow. A slight set back, but really nothing that we aren't used to as Rochesterians and ponders for this early in the season.

I feel a little more confident this time that spring is really close. So close that now the snow drops, crocus, winter aconite and other flowers are already open and many others are budding out or are sending up their new shoots. The pond has been without any ice for at least a week and the fish are more active, and swimming faster and around the entire pond.

There was even an article in the newspaper about the spring peepers, frogs, toads and other water loving creatures migrating back to the ponds from the marshy areas at Mendon Ponds Park. With these new insights, I will try it again and say Welcome Back Spring.

At the March meeting, Larry Nau's presentation on the IWGS Symposiums was very interesting and the pond tour pictures of the Florida gardens provided an interesting contrast with their size and use of tropical foliage to make the gardens look lush and more isolated or enclosed than we can accomplish here. It is surprising the difference that a warmer and more extended growing season can make.

Even the scenes from commercial establishments that he presented had an entirely different look and feel than

what we are accustomed to seeing around here. The size and numbers of lilies in the propagating tanks were, at least to me, unbelievable.

Following this segment, he described his efforts in deciding and collecting the plant materials for the certified collection of waterlilies that have been sent to Thailand for the IWGS 2007 Symposium. They will be installed in the new King Rama IX Public Park and will be part of the celebration of The King's eightieth birthday. The photos of the various waterlilies in the collection were outstanding.

We hope that Larry will make the trip to Thailand and do a follow-up presentation for us on this garden with all of the lilies in blossom. I'm sure that his presentation would also include views of interesting side trips that he would make on the tour, as well as some up close views of his visits with the members of the Thai committee with which he has worked so closely. He might even be able to collect information on some of their waterlily breeders and the plants that they have developed or are developing.

Coming events

Please note the date change of our April meeting to Friday, April 13th so that our members can enjoy an extended Easter holiday vacation.

To help you prepare for this meeting on extending your garden enjoyment by adding night lighting, it might be helpful to have you think of some of the points to consider to help you make the decision and possibly aid you in asking the necessary questions about the equipment and materials that will be presented.

There are two basic types of garden lighting- Functional and artful. Functional lighting is what would be used for paths, steps, safety and security. It can also be used to light a patio or deck to expand your living space. Artful lighting is used to enhance the night time view of your property and the natural beauty of your gardens and the materials in them. It can also be used for patios and decks to establish a festive lighting mood or arrangement

for special occasions.

Think about the mood that you would like to create.

- Down lighting, especially from on high, can be romantic and is a natural effect. It should simulate moonlight.
- Backlighting creates silhouettes and adds mystery.
- Narrow beams and small spotlights highlight the object. From the front, it has a flattening effect. From the side, it can be used to define the edges of the object and accent its textures. They direct and control your gaze by establishing a visual destination for you.
- Candlelight can also be a valuable addition to tour lighting for special occasions. It helps to set the atmosphere for an inviting setting.
- Up lighting, coming up from the ground to an object, though somewhat unnatural, can add drama and new focal points.

This presentation, however, should be a more do-it-yourself approach to pond and garden lighting rather than a design planning session. With the improvements in lighting materials, their ready availability and the water and weather resistant sealers now in use, we hope that you will find some of your personal things that you can convert to custom and unique garden lighting fixtures. You can create your own lighting effects and moods. It is even possible to add the excitement that fiber optics can provide without the higher cost of the commercially prepared units. The advantage of fiber optics is their size and ease of concealment to create more subtle effects. They also afford you the opportunity of changing colors with either a motorized color wheel or with colored filters that can be located in an easily accessible central or more remote location.

Jim Stalker, who will be our presenter, is an electrician, general handyman and hands-on gardener and ponder. He will offer suggestions on selecting the proper wiring and power

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equipment ratings that are so important to creating a successful and flexible lighting system. While you should plan for some flexibility and growth within the system, he will stress the need to decide the type of lighting effects you want, either subtle to extend the viewing into the early evening hours or a bolder approach to full night time viewing or possibly a compromise somewhere in between.

Regardless of the type of lighting you choose, don't over do it. The more fixtures and lights that you use, the more you may want to lower the light level of each one to maintain a reasonable contrast level between the items and areas that are lit and the surrounding darker areas.

One way to visualize how your lighting might look is to make up a lighting plan. Then take flashlights, oil or kerosene lamps candles or other light sources and set them out according to your plan. Watch the changes that occur from twilight into dark and then play with their location and light level until you are satisfied with the results. You may even decide to keep some of these as you add the more permanent lights.

Our program for the May meeting will be on fish health. Helen Roberts, a veterinarian who specializes in fish care, will be our guest speaker. Since this is such an important part of our caring for our charges, we plan to announce this as an open meeting to other interested watergardeners. We are looking forward to having an expanded attendance for this event. Therefore, I have and will continue to ask that anyone who is planning on attending this program to please call (585) 473 6276 to reserve a place. This sharing of information should help everyone to give the best care to their fish. In return, they will get the most out of them.

Member to Member

I recently talked to June Amies. Her recovery and therapy are progressing well but a little more slowly than anticipated. At the present rate, she is

sure that it will be several additional months before she and Bob, who has had several cortisone shots for his back pain, will be able to do the stairs to come to a regular meeting. She is hopeful that they will be able to at least, do part of the tour in July. She asked me to extend their thanks to everyone for their good wishes and prayers.

Thoughts For Spring

It is time to prepare our ponds and water gardens for our summer season. Unfortunately, after the ice left Kathy's lily pond, we noticed a considerable drift of nice, very green hair or filament algae. It grew considerably over the winter in the area of the water flow from the circulating pump. This prompted thoughts of the overall preparations that we should be considering.

These are some of the suggestions both old and new that we think you will find helpful.

Spring is the most critical time for our fish, so we will start with helping them to come out of their dormancy.

- Check your fish as soon and as closely as possible for sores, infections, parasites, unusual behavior and any other signs of illness. If your pond is over-stocked now would be a good time to thin the population before the breeding activities start and the population increases even more. You may find new homes for them with other ponders.
- Add materials to stimulate the natural slime coat that healthy fish develop. This is important because their immune system was basically shut down in the cold temperatures.
- Aeromonas and Pseudomonas (bad bacteria) will become active as the temperature warms above 40 degrees F and can affect your Koi while their immune system is still weak.
- Clean the loose debris and organic matter from the pond. This can be a breeding place for the bad bacteria as well as a source

of harmful gases. (This could include removing any hair algae that is present.) If the pond had a significant build-up of organic matter on the bottom, you may want to consider adding a bottom drain or one of the newer in pond bottom drains.

- Do a 20-25% water change once the pond temperature is above 50 degrees. Be sure to dechlorinate the water and keep its temperature near that of the pond water.
- Add one of the commercial enzymes to breakdown any residual organics and sludges that may have been left behind in the general clean out. There are also probiotics like Koizyme and Lymnozyme that help to control some of the pathogenic bacteria.
- Clean the filter and get it back on line to establish the necessary beneficial bacteria to help provide the proper water quality for the pond. Test and check your pump, seals and piping to verify that there are no leaks or other parameters that could cause the pond to be pumped out. Check the streams and waterfalls to make sure that the freeze/thaw cycles haven't shifted the rock work that could possibly lead to overflow situations.
- Test the water especially for pH (7-8 is the optimal range) ammonia (should be 0) and nitrite (should be 0). Some also recommend testing total alkalinity (should be less than 100). There may be a nitrite spike in spring as the water warms up and before the beneficial bacteria are fully active. Regular water changes can help to control this and the addition of salt at a 0.1% will help to protect the fish from nitrite toxicity (brown blood disease).
- If you use a UV unit, the bulb should be replaced about every two years in our area since they are usually operated for only 5-7 months a year. Their efficiency drops off noticeably after a full

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year of use.

Raising Baby Fish

Some of the members have asked for suggestions for raising baby Koi. Dr. Erik Johnson had a recent article in *Aquascape Lifestyles* on this topic. He starts by defining baby fish as those that have already hatched, survived the fry phase (so small that you can hardly see them) and have become free swimming versions of their parents.

Breeding usually happens quite effortlessly on our part every spring in suitable ponds when conditions are right to trigger the spawning response. A suitable pond has some natural cover and natural food sources for the bay fish. There should be rocks and plant materials in a shallow areas. They will encourage spawning and provide places for the eggs to be deposited. Spawning mats and grasses can be used if the eggs are to be collected and hatched in another location.

Water quality can be a big concern because an excess of eggs and milt are produced. The excess of these plus the decaying of unfertilized eggs are unstable proteins that cause ammonia readings to skyrocket. This can kill some of the fry and baby fish, which will also create another ammonia surge.

A bottom drain can be a detriment to success, because the fry tend to rest on the bottom of the pond for 24 hours or more before they become free swimming. Without rocks, plants or other structures to hold them back, they may be picked up by the filtration system.

The fry can also be consumed by other fish and their own siblings as they root around these areas in their search for food. Although the Koi may eat some of the eggs, they do not feast on them like some of the other species, but this may be a more significant problem in mixed species ponds.

The eggs and fry do not need food at those stages. Once they become free swimming, they need food that is very, very small. They will look for microorganisms, algae and plant materials to nibble on. (This includes the zooplankton that was described in last month's newsletter.)

You may make your own baby fish food by thoroughly whisking a chicken egg in a bowl and then very slowly pouring it into boiling water and further whisking it as it falls through the boiling water. This creates an egg/water slurry. This is cooled and filtered out on a cheesecloth. These solids are then mixed into a quart of pond water and splashed around in the pond. It is a complete nutritional source for baby fish. You must feed this in small quantities and not too much since it will tend to pollute the water and increase the ammonia level.

The Koi that survive these initial stages should grow well and the good ones will start to show color and some may even develop patterns at around three weeks. Others may remain a dark brown or black. If color hasn't developed by the time that they are 2 - 3 inches long, they may never develop any color at all.

Remember that baby fish will do better and develop faster with less competition and more growing space. So, select those that you think are or will be your favorites, then place them where they can have the best space and conditions. Sit back and watch and enjoy your new charges develop into variations of your own "creation".

If you already have too many fish and want to completely eliminate new baby fish from your pond, you have two choices. You can create a rather sterile looking pond with no plant life, no rock work and no shallow areas to suppress the spawning urge and to make survival of any fry almost impossible. Or, you can introduce a couple of "pan" fish into the pond. These fish will aggressively eat the eggs and fry. It is a technique used by some hatcheries to avoid unwanted fry and babies from their holding systems.

Public Water Gardens Across the USA (continued from front page)

Chicago Botanic
Garden 1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, Illinois

<http://www.chicagobotanic.org/explore/aquatic.php>

The Chicago Botanic Garden has a Water Gardens in the Great Basin, Aquatic Garden and a 45-foot waterfall. In the Aquatic Garden, visitors can view scores of magnificent waterlilies and lotus in various stages of bud and bloom. The Water Gardens consisting of tens of thousands of native and ornamental plants. An array of aquatic and semi-aquatic plants that range from native grasses and sedges help prevent erosion on the miles of Garden shoreline. Lotuses and waterlilies provide color and drama during the summer months and well into autumn.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

1000 Washington Avenue,
Brooklyn, NY

<http://www.bbg.org/exp/stroll/lilypool.html>

Two large pools are planted with nearly 100 varieties of hardy and tropical water-lilies and sacred lotus—a stunning attraction in July, August, and September.

The Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden is one of the oldest and most visited Japanese-inspired gardens outside Japan.

OREGON GARDEN

879 W. Main St.
Silverton, OR

<http://www.oregongarden.org/index.html>

The Oregon Garden, located on 80 acres in Historic Silverton. A-mazing Water Garden is a one-acre display of ornamental aquatic plants and 80-foot-long water wall greets visitors near the grand entrance to The Garden. Carol Mayer -Reed, an award-winning Portland landscape designer, designed the A-mazing Water Garden. The A-mazing water garden is also home to hundreds of different types of animals included koi, bull frogs, heron and mallards just to name a few.



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Board Members 2007

President: Larry Hursh
Vice President: Bob Wheeler
Secretary: Kathy Hursh
Treasurer: John Roguski/Les Saiers
Pond Tour Chairperson: Norm James/Les Saiers
Refreshments: Yvonne Wheeler and Kathy Hursh
Newsletter Editors: Hursh, James, and Nau families
Webmaster: Norm James - gvpakc@attglobal.net

Purpose of the Club

- To promote, create and enlarge the hobby of keeping, breeding, appreciating and exhibiting Koi and goldfish.
- To promote and appreciate the hobby of Water Gardening.
- To disseminate information about Koi, goldfish and Water Gardening.
- To socialize and have fun.

We meet in a very friendly atmosphere at 7:00 pm, the first Friday of every month, at the Rochester Civic Garden Center (the Castle), 5 Castle Park, off Reservoir Ave., in Highland Park. Parking is free. Anyone interested in water gardening and/or Koi is welcome to join us. We ask that you consider joining the club after your third visit. For more information call Larry H. (585) 473-6276 or e-mail lkhursh@aol.com or visit the club website at www.ggw.org/gvpakc

Calendar of Events

April 13, 2007: Please note the date change. We have opted not to meet on the Good Friday holiday so as not to conflict with some family travel plans. Our topic will be Do-It-Yourself garden lighting. Jim Stalker will describe some DIY fixtures and guide us through sizing the wire and transformer components.

April 13-15, 2007: Bird of Prey Days by the Braddock Bay Raptor Research at Braddock Bay Park Lodge.

May 4, 2007: Presentation on Fish Health by Helen Roberts a veterinarian who specializes in fish diseases-prevention and treatment.

May 11, 2007: NFKPC meeting

May 19, 2007: Genesee Land Trust - Native plant sale at Brighton Town Hall

May 26, 2007: RCGC Proud Market Plant sale

Advance Notices: Genesee Land Trust - Backyard Habitat Tour on **June 23, 2007**

The AKCA Seminar will be in Mesa, Arizona on **June 21-24, 2007**.

“Naturally Green” - A live gardening show every Saturday from **9-10 am** on **WYSL 1040 AM**.