



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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Nature's Bog Garden



In the marshes and swamps though out the area you can find the wild marsh marigolds (*Caltha palustris*) in bloom from mid-March through June, but then this demure plant seems to vanish as quickly as it appeared in the spring! Definitely a wildflower, the plant is an herbaceous perennial that is also well-suited as an addition to garden pond edges. Tolerant of light levels from full sun to part shade, the marsh marigold is also a good choice for container gardening in shallow water features.

Related to and resembling a large buttercup, the marsh marigold sprouts from large tufts of growth that spawn large, glossy, kidney-shaped leaves and long, hollow stems, which seem to split into two flower stalks, each bearing a single blossom that may reach two inches in diameter.

To grow the marsh marigold, soil should be kept mucky. This is one plant that does like wet feet! Even during dormancy, be sure to keep the soil moist. Propagate the plant by dividing its roots in the autumn.

These pictures were all taken along the Lehigh Valley Trail in Cedar Swamp just a short walk east of East Henrietta Rd. The photos below are of red and white Trilliums. You can also see sunk cabbage in the picture on the right. Note: Do Not pick the flowers of Trillium as this can kill or seriously injure the plant.



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

Last Month

The May meeting featured a presentation by Helen Roberts, DVM, on fish health and our open invitation brought us a few new visitors. Everyone enjoyed the presentation and hopefully came away with useful information on fish health and fish care.

Helen's presentation reflected her personality and was very energetic and fast paced. This made it possible for her to cover a tremendous amount of material and still allow time for questions and answers within the meeting time frame.

Although discussions of this topic can be overly scientific and at times tedious, she was able to keep it lively with bits of humor and cartoons of fish life represented with somewhat human characteristics. She provided the scientific information in an easily understood manner and terms and discussed her interpretations of the characteristics of the health problems with observations that we could easily make within our own ponds and on our fish. The handouts that she provided reinforced the same clear but precise information regarding problems in ornamental ponds, Koi quarantine procedures and, on a more technical side, a description of the preparations for Koi surgery.

As a follow-up to Helen's program, here are some suggestions to help you judge the health of your fish. By being observant and knowing what the normal appearance and behavior of a healthy fish should be, you will be able to recognize any early signs of a potential health issue. Normal Koi appearance should include a healthy, shiney slime coat, healthy looking red gills, no sores, ulcers, abrasions, predatory injuries, no

raised scales and no frayed or split fins. Furthermore, to reduce the possibility of misdiagnosis, the speed of onset of the apparent disease, the season of the year, changes in water quality, the presence of possible fish predators and feeding materials and schedules must also be considered. Koi health problems should be accessed by following a suspect origin that progresses from water quality to parasites to possible fungal, viral and bacterial infections.

Of course, normal behavior is temperature dependent (above 50 F) and can vary with the time of year. The fish should appear to be hungry. They should not separate themselves from the other fish. They should not repeatedly flash off the sides or bottom of the pond (occasional brief flashing is normal). Koi should appear to swim smoothly with fluid movement from side to side. When stopped, they should not appear to be positioned with the head or tail at an upward or downward angle.

At temperatures below 50 F, Koi slow down and even stop eating as the temperature approaches 45 F. They may seem to huddle together near or at the bottom of the pond and seem to remain almost motionless. If they begin to lie on their side at the bottom of the pond, the water temperature may be getting too low (less than 35 F.). This is very stressful to the fish and their ability to survive can be compromised depending on the speed and duration of the lower temperature change.

Behavior can be one of the first clues that a fish is starting with a problem. Just like us, a change in feeding response, or going off feed, is one of the initial and easily noticed reactions.

A diseased fish may swim at the surface or near the water returns, swim erratically, swim lethargically or swim very little and lie listlessly on the bottom. These behavioral changes could indicate the start of a bacterial disease. However, they are also commonly displayed by fish

that could be stressed by poor water quality, toxicants or some other infectious disease.

Clinical signs, such as behavioral abnormalities, sudden physical change or lesions are also important aids in making a diagnosis. They can be readily noticed during daily observations or upon closer external examination. They are also good indicators of the progression or regression of an infectious disease. Again, all of this is based on knowing the normal appearance and behavior of your fish and then using this information to accurately describe them to identify the various possible primary or secondary causes.

If all other options are ruled out and a bacterial infection is suspected, the sores are often chronic and progress through days to weeks. They are more seasonal occurring in the moderate temperatures of spring and fall. If possible get a second opinion and double check your evaluations before starting treatment for bacterial infection.

With an understanding of these normal functions of the fish, you should be able to recognize and act on any potential health issues at their onset and before they worsen. Your rapid response will give your Koi the best chance to have a long, healthy life and also provide you many years of enjoying their company.

Coming Events

On Saturday, May 26th the Rochester Civic Garden Center will host their Proud Market Plant Sale. It starts at 8:00AM and continues until most plant materials are sold out (usually about 11:30 AM). There will be several vendors as well as plants offered by garden groups and the members and friends of the Garden Center. Various home-owners adjacent to RCGC also have plant yard sales that are also worth checking out.

There will be a LilyFest at Bergen Water Gardens on June 2-3 with our

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own fund raising plant and product auction about 1:30 on Sunday, June 3rd. We will have a club area there that we will staff to answer questions about the club and in some cases about our ponds and fish experiences. As I explained at the meeting, you don't have to be an "expert" to answer most of the questions; your own experiences will be helpful. Most of the time, the people just like to talk about their ponds and experiences, the same as us. If you are willing to assist us with this, please call Larry Hursh at 473-6276 or just come out and fill in. We hope that we may recruit new members through these interactions. We can also use plant materials for the auction on Sunday. If you are dividing or removing some of your plant materials this spring, please consider saving them to donate to this fund raising event. Please identify your donations with the type of plant and any color information. The proceeds from the auction go toward the expenses for guest speakers and educational materials for the meetings and the club information library.

Since there will be no regular meeting on June 1st, we will hold a brief update meeting at 1:00PM just prior to the auction. I was asked at the May meeting to provide a brief tour of the various types of plant materials at Bergen Water Gardens and to give a brief description of the plants and their use in and around the pond as part of the June meeting. I will be working with Larry Nau and others at Bergen to put something together along those lines. We will also try to provide similar information for the plant materials at the auction.

This year, we have agreed to act as one of the sponsors for the Genesee Land Trust Garden Tour on Saturday, June 23rd. This is a great opportunity for us to bring our club to the attention of other gardening fans. It may also help us to recruit

new pond and water feature owners for a future pond tour. If you attend this tour, we would appreciate your suggestions on the gardens or other highlights that might be of interest for future club input.

The Rochester Civic Garden Center is finalizing their garden tour booklets. The tour will take place on Saturday, July 7th and will feature gardens of the Pittsford- Mendon area.

The Niagara Frontier Koi and Pond Club pond tour is scheduled for Saturday, July 21st. We have enjoyed exchanging pond tour visits with them for the past several years and will be joining them again this year. If you are interested please call Bob Wheeler 461-5315 or Larry Hursh 473-6276 by July 14 to add your name to the list for our final count.

Our pond tour and picnic will be on Saturday, July 28th. We still need a couple of ponds to make this another well filled and interesting tour. If you have not been a host for a tour or have made some changes since our last visit, please consider adding your pond to the list. Also, if you know someone else that has a pond and might be willing to share a visit with the club, please let us know.

For our newer members, ours is a progressive tour. The stops are scheduled at specific times and proceed from stop to stop according to the schedule. This allows the hosts to also participate in the tour. We will conclude the day with a picnic at the final stop. This is a potluck type picnic. The club provides the meat dish, beverages and picnic supplies and the attending members will be asked to provide either an appetizer, side dish or dessert based on the first letter of your family name.

Perennial Problem Review

Two of the pond problems that come to our attention every year in questions at meetings are algae

(primarily the string type) and feeding.

The current issue of *KOI USA* has articles on both of these. I will use them as the basis for this portion of the newsletter.

Filament Algae

James P. Reilly's article "Why Filamentous Algae Will Never Be Cured" is an in depth look at this on going problem. He shows that there are almost as many different names as there are variations of this type of algae.

He introduces us to the annoying and dominating growth of this material with the less than comforting acknowledgement that it has been around and survived well for a few hundred million years. Some of the common names for the various filament types around the world are: Blanket weed, beard algae, wool weed, green 'sticky' strand algae, hair algae, pond moss, string algae, bush algae, angel hair, green bunch algae, thread algae, cotton ball algae, slime algae, mold algae, horsehair algae, rope weed, pond scum and probably many others that are not as commonly used. The fact that there are so many names adds to the confusion as the problem is discussed from area to area around the world. The fact that there are over 8,000 known varieties of them that still flourish adds to this difficulty.

There is some hope in minimizing this by identifying three of the main groups and learning some of their characteristics. The "Big Three" are: Spirogyra, Pithophora and Cladophora.

Spyrogyra are the easy ones and are based on the slime algae. They are usually like a raft of green that will sink or rise in the water during its various photosynthetic phases. They are a light to medium shade of green. They are slimy to the touch because they are very soft. Photosynthesis creates clearly visible gas bubbles that are held within the mass and effect the buoyancy of it. It has the strongest odor of the three

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groups.

Note: "They should not be confused with the blue/green slime algae which are not algae but Cyanobacteriales, a bacteria that has photosynthetic properties.

Pithophora are also easy to spot and include the blanket weed types. They are coarse to the touch, hence the horse hair and wool algae common names. It is the only one in these three groups that is capable of growing off the bottom of a deeper pond as well as the sides. It may vary in color shades from yellow/green through dark green to a green/brown. It is a very rapid grower and is the fastest growing filament type. It exhibits seasonal growth in the wild, but seems to survive in an open ended manner in captivity (our ponds). At its peak glory, it may indeed look like a veggie rope.

Cladophora is the next group and it even contains some types that are very desirable. The ones that are mentioned as concerns for this group are the ones that we deal with most frequently in our ponds because they become a run-away nuisance. It is a lovely light to grass green color and gives the impression of being fine or delicate, but in reality is as tough as nails. It feels more cotton-like in texture. It is rapid growing but prefers unstable water conditions and more rapidly moving water. It is the fine strands that are usually seen at waterfalls and at the pond water return outlets. It is capable of growing a few inches per day in favorable summer conditions. Unlike Spirogyra and Pithophora, Koi will work at Cladophora if there is a shortage of other food materials and sometimes during ritualistic schooling behaviors. (Note: You may see Koi tear at the Spirogyra and Pithophora, but they will usually spit out the fragments and swim away from them. What they are actually after are other types of food particles that are caught or trapped on those forms.)

This is probably more information than you ever thought you wanted or needed to know about filamentous

algae. However, I hope that it will be helpful in several ways if and when you have the problem. You now know that:

- It is not a new or unique problem and it has been around for eons.
- You are not alone in trying to resolve the problem.
- You can see why you may only get one type at a time and why they keep reappearing at the same spot or under certain conditions.
- Perhaps you can turn it into a 'happier' learning experience by trying to find which of these three major groups may be the marker for your type(s).

Feeding Suggestions

The basic information for this article is also extracted from information in the current issue of *KOI USA*. It is from the "Q and A" portion prepared by Brian Drake. His suggestions are:

Select the best Koi food that your budget will allow based on the amount of wheat germ meal, krill meal and fishmeal.

Check and compare the percentages of protein, oil, fiber, ash, fat and phosphorous. These will help you determine the right water temperature for using the food.

The temperature feeding schedule suggestions are:
64-86 F feed 2-4 times per day
52-63 F feed once daily and preferably during the warmest time.
below 52 F do not feed pellets --- a few cherrios or other grain type food can be used to check the Koi status.

Throwing in handfuls of food is only ok when you have many Koi to be fed. After seven minutes, excess food must be netted out to preserve water quality.

As the water temperature rises, the Koi prefer to eat many times rather than one or two larger/longer feedings.

Try not to stick with one type of food. Just like you, they prefer a little variety to spice up their life.

It is okay to feed your Koi such

things as lettuce, mashed peas, squash, orange, watermelon and cantaloupe. Boiled yams and sweet potatoes can be fed to Koi to increase their girth and to support large female Koi.

Pre-soaking pellets, though not necessary, does make it easier for the Koi to eat and digest them. Some even create a paste from the softened pellets which also helps them to grow larger. The paste can be fortified and flavored by adding garlic powder, vitamin C powder, ground up crab shell and honey. These really work well when the temperature is 65 F or above.

Buy smaller pellets than you think your fish will need. Eg. 30" and larger Koi should get medium sized pellets. 10"-30" are better fed small to medium pellets. If you have larger pellets, you could use them to make the above mentioned pastes. These size recommendations are easier for them to digest and keep the Koi from nudging them around the pond with their noses until they turn to mush, which makes it easier for them to eat. The smaller Koi can be fed really small pellets and "crumbles".

I would like to inform that we now have the new IWGS booklet "The Lotus -- Know It and Grow It" which was compiled by Kelly Billing and Paula Biles in our club library. It is only 47 pages, but it contains a great deal of information including botanical background, traditions, lore, cultivation and uses. It has many wonderful, but regretfully, mostly uncaptioned photos.



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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

May 26, 2007: RCGC Proud Market Plant sale at the Castle 8:00AM until sold out (usually around 11:30-noon.)

June 1, 2007: No meeting tonight. We will have a brief meeting prior to the plant auction at LilyFest on June 3 about 1:00 PM

June 2-3, 2007: LilyFest at Bergen Water Gardens and Nursery. Our plant and product auction will be Sunday, June 3, about 1:30

June 23, 2007: Genesee Land Trust - Backyard Habitat Tour We are one of the sponsors for this event.

June 21-24, 2007: The AKCA Seminar in Mesa, Arizona

July 6, 2007: No Meeting tonight due to Holiday schedule

July 13, 2007: Rescheduled Monthly meeting Topic TBD

July 16-22, 2007: IWGS Symposium Bangkok, Thailand

July 21, 2007: NFKPC Pond Tour and Picnic.

July 28, 2007: This will be our pond tour and picnic. Please consider adding your pond as a stop on this tour.

August 3, 2007: Review NFKPC and GVPAKC tours. Discuss mid-summer pond, water feature and fish concerns.

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