



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 11

November, 2007

2007 Pond Tour — Lois S. and Mark B.'s "Beaver Pond"



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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

Last Month

The weather this past month has been great. Our waterlilies are still blooming, especially the tropicals, and they seem to be saying that we are not ready for winter so please let us continue to entertain you and show off. I even have a spring blooming Pasque (white) flower that is in bloom now while I'm writing this newsletter. It is something to enjoy and think what our ponds might be like even later in the month if we were in a warmer climate.

The weather was so nice, when we were supposed to have our October meeting, that it would have been difficult to pass up such a glorious day just to review the concepts of putting the ponds and fish to sleep. That would also mean that all too soon, they would probably disappear from sight until sometime in spring. The plants are still growing so well, that the overwintering processes are not foremost in our minds. Many of them have not started to enter their dormant or rest periods. Others have not hardened off their growth or developed the winter root growth necessary for their survival.

With the small numbers present, we decided to save the material that we had planned for this meeting and may save it for a presentation at a future date and under more appropriate conditions. The Board members who were present, took advantage of the extra time to review some of this year's activities and look forward to things for 2008.

There is an additional idea that I would like to add to our winter preparation lists. Linda Siler, in *Flowers and Fins*, the Springfield

Water Garden Society Newsletter mentions that fall is perhaps one of the better times to cull your fish. This makes a lot of sense because the filtering capabilities of the pond as well as the beneficial bacteria will be slowing down noticeably in the near future. Winter is hard enough on the fish without overloading the system when the water quality may become compromised. By culling now, in case of disasters during the winter wiping you out, you will have known stock with which to replenish the pond. Bringing some of the smaller fish indoors for the winter could also improve their chances for survival and additional growth.

We hope that your winter preparations will go well after our first frost, but if you have any questions or concerns please call us and we will try to answer them or guide you through some of the concepts.

More Algae

After the information regarding the possible use of algae for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and producing bio-fuel, this item seemed to show where algae may have an additional advantage.

"According to *Landscaping for Wildlife and Water Quality*, a guide published by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, just one pound of phosphorus can produce up to fifty pounds of algae."

With growth rates like this, algae could be a sustainable source for bio-fuels. This figure also indicates why, when we have enough nutrients and excess phosphorus that algae will grow and spread so quickly in our ponds.

Phosphorous is an essential fish food nutritional element that is necessary for survival, growth, bone, cartilage formation and collagen production. Fish will release any excess phosphate in their waste

products where it is held as an organic phosphate. When these wastes and uneaten food break down and are decomposed, the phosphate is then released as an inorganic or reactive phosphate that we can detect through testing and treat when necessary. This reactive phosphate is the form that becomes one of the foods that may cause an excessive algae bloom.

Phosphates can also enter the pond through tap water, since some water treatment facilities add phosphate based corrosion inhibitors to protect the pipes. These so called poly-phosphates will also break down into the inorganic type and may, in some cases, measurably increase the phosphate level or load on the pond. Phosphates could come from run off from fertilizers and other garden treatments as well.

An excess of phosphates may not create an algae problem in all ponds. There are other elements, conditions and nutrients that are necessary like sunlight, aeration and some iron to make it grow. However, when the missing nutrient becomes available, an algae bloom is sure to occur.

The excess phosphate can be treated with a product like PHOS-OUT that binds up the inorganic phosphates and makes it unavailable as a nutrient. The treatment reaction may cause a temporary haze in the water that will be removed in a relatively short time period by the filter system. A single treatment with PHOS-OUT is capable of removing 1.5 ppm of phosphate and is safe for pets, birds, wildlife and other pond inhabitants.

Coming events

Due to the change of plans during the last meeting, we really didn't receive any nominations for new, replacement or additional members for our Board of Directors. We hope that the thought of being

(Continued on page 3)

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

nominated didn't keep some of you away. You can always decline the nomination. We also understand a certain amount of reluctance of people to volunteer for these positions and the uncertainty of what you may be getting into. We all work together on the plans, so you will not be alone. You can also check with current and past Board members for additional insights into what is involved. The one thing we can promise you is, that you will have more fun, get to know everyone a little better and have a chance to bring more interest and activity to our meetings and events.

Furthermore, to help us in setting up the 2008 schedule of events and topics, when the Board meets in January, we would appreciate any suggestions that you might have especially for new and interesting topics, types of speakers or off-site tours or visits. We need this information before the end of the year, so that we can start to recruit speakers and to make the necessary time and contact arrangements before the speaker schedules become filled with other commitments.

We still have a "Thermoplanter" that was donated to the club for our raffle by Mark Prescott who developed it in his Black River Nursery. We will be placing it in the raffle for the November meeting. The timing of this donation is perfect, in that it is an additional device and technique that may be utilized in the wintering over process. Mark was kind enough to also share some ideas on over wintering plants using this product.

November will be our last business and informational meeting for this year. The actual elections will be one of the main business items. There will be a final opportunity

for additional candidates to volunteer or be nominated prior to the actual voting. Please join us to assure that we have good representation for this election.

The informational portion will be a presentation by Larry and Nathan Nau on the IWGS symposium in Thailand. Larry has explained a lot of the beauty of this event to me and I am looking forward to seeing some of this in his many pictures and hearing more about their experiences. From what I saw in a current travelogue and in the article in the IWGS Water Garden Journal, it is an exceptionally beautiful and friendly country.

Please save the date December 7th for our Christmas Party. This will follow our usual format with a gathering at 6:30 followed by a dish to pass dinner at about 7:00 PM. The entertainment will be in the form of our Pond Jeopardy game that reviews some of the information that was presented during the year. The tentative suggestion based on the first letter of your family name for the dish to pass portion of the Christmas Party is: I-P provide an appetizer dish; A-H provide a salad or side dish type; and Q-Z are the desserts. If you have a special dish that you would prefer to make rather than work according to the suggested guidelines, Please call Yvonne Wheeler at 461-5315 or Kathy Hursh at 473-6276. This is necessary to keep the various choices in balance.

Personal Note

I want to thank you all again for your prayers and support during the start of my chemotherapy phase of treatments. Everything, so far, is going very well. I have not had nausea or other problems with possible side effects. I am

doing very well and I'm looking forward to seeing you at our meetings and activities. My energy levels are possibly higher from the adrenaline rush from all the new routines and the anticipation of meeting new people and learning more about what is happening. Some of the medication may also be doing its part by minimizing the tiredness that the other medications may cause.

Koi : A different history

We all know that Koi have been around for a very long time. Now, Ray Jordan is in the process of writing a series of articles on "Koi History And Genealogy" in *Koi USA* that bring out some of what I consider as more interesting points for consideration and discussion.

There is no actual written history regarding the early development of the colored carp. A lot of what is available is often based on oral histories that were passed down from generation to generation of Koi breeding families. These are somewhat sketchy and at times offer conflicting information. It wasn't until after World War II that some of the information began to be printed, at first only in Japanese and later as translations or direct writings in English as interest started to develop. Thus, the documented history covers a much shorter time span that one might expect for something that really goes back many centuries.

Some of the reason for this is that as families collected or noted especially fine fish or fish with interesting and auspicious colors, they kept them as their personal possessions. They did not reveal their techniques or sources so that others would not infringe on the fame of their very special fish by allowing others to breed similar or, even worse, better ones. Even today, newly created Koi varieties

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

are rare, closely guarded secrets that are priced and protected accordingly. It was known, even then, as a poor business practice to give away your cross breeding information and the advantages that you have developed through your hard work to other breeders.

The early, wild river carp were mostly dark gray to brown with cream to light yellow belly. The mix of genetics from different groups as they were moved about, eventually produced mutations of color and pattern that included red, light brown, gray, black, white, blue, green, yellow etc. Some even developed mixed colors and unique patterns like netting, tortoise shell and calico. The Chinese and other cultures started to favor these brighter, more colorful carp as their personal pets and kept them in ornamental ponds to enjoy them more closely.

Our Special Koi today are man-made derivatives of these common river carp (*Cyprinus caprio*) that most likely originated in the Caspian and Black Sea regions of Eastern Europe millions of years ago. Since they are very hardy and adaptable to many different climates and water conditions, it was easy for them to be transported by various trade routes to other parts of the world.

Small carp were easily transported along the silk routes toward China, the rest of Asia and eventually Japan. They traveled from these locations to Europe with the early Roman conquests and also again about the time of the crusades. Carp were also transported across the Atlantic to the east coast of America with some of the early settlers. As the settlers moved westward in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they sometimes transported them to the next outpost to provide an extra portion of protein to assure the survival of the new settlers.

It is likely that some better Koi first arrived in Japan about 1400-1600 years ago. The mountainous regions of Mushigame/Ojita Niigata probably then became the true birth or starting place for the more modern variations. The idea of "why there", is that the long, snow bound, six month long winters with about 20 feet of snow a year, kept most of the farmers indoors with little to do.

Their artistic interests were challenged and having brought their fish indoors so they would survive the harsh winters, they may have thought "I wonder if I could breed these to create a new type of 'Living Art.'" Carp were already revered as auspicious animals as symbols of strength, perseverance, luck, health and wealth. If they could further develop the auspicious colors of their culture (red, white, black, blue and gold) these Koi would be even more precious.

An example that he highlights is the possible development of the Showa variety. Some stories claim that it was the result of crossing two varieties of Utsuri. These were both popular varieties at the beginning of the last century. Since only one breeder had been successful at developing them, there had to be an unannounced cross. Finally, an older, retired breeder gave a possible insight to the puzzle. It seems that in an much older family history, there is a long-time secret reference to a unique type of Koi (Kawarigoi) that was used as one of the parents for the original spawning that produced the first Showa colors and pattern. This makes more sense as a possible explanation since there had to be something unique to explain the limited development of this fish versus the implied more common crosses.

We do know that Koi breeding was much less sophisticated and much less of a business even into

the early 20th century. It really wasn't until after WWII that it started to be a full time effort and the start of a world wide hobby. While the majority of the colored carp produced prior to 1950 would be considered as sub-standard in today's trade, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Shinto priests and Shrines for preserving some of the best examples of these colored carp in their local ponds. They managed to protect them during the hard times when many them would have been harvested to become food for the army. If this tiny but precious pool of the collective colored carp genetics had not been preserved, the koi hobby of today would be nowhere near as beautiful and active as it is. The strength of the existing genetic pool, our knowledge of how best to keep, breed and raise Koi can only lead to an even brighter future.

Mister Jordan does not make any claims for the real accuracy for his version of Koi history or genealogy. However, he looks at his research as giving him an opportunity to review the material, select the most plausible and relevant materials to explain the great diversity that has developed over time. He compares himself to a Koi breeder who looks at a group of baby Koi, decides which will improve and which to cull or sell off. He has already cast off some of the more common history and incorporated newly discovered information that seems to be more logical. Hopefully, just like the Koi breeders, he hopes that his selections for this history might also have a 75%-80% correct factor and will be considered as acceptable as the Koi breeders culling.



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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

October 6, 2007: We will be asking for nominations or volunteers to run for the various officer and board member positions. The elections will be held at the November meeting. Our main topic this month will be a discussion of the various methods used to winter-over water garden and other plants. If time permits, we will also review and discuss preparing the ponds and water features for winter.

October 13, 2007: NFKPC monthly meeting

November 3, 2007: Election of officers and board members. We are hopeful that Larry Nau will be able to have the date open to update us on his trip to Thailand and show some of the beautiful flowers and gardens that he toured as part of the IWGS Symposium.

November 10, 2007: NFKPC

December 7, 2007: This will be our Christmas party and year end celebration of another successful year. We will also present a review of this year's information in our version of pond jeopardy.

January 4, 2008: There will be no meeting this month.

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