

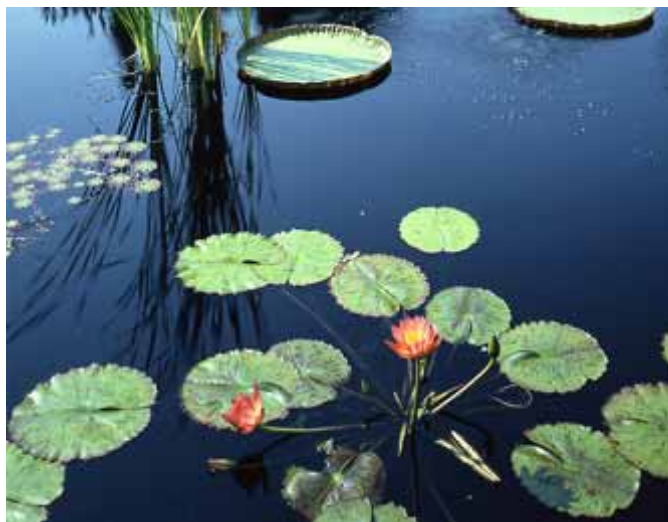


Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 01

January, 2008

Wave Hill Garden—Bronx New York



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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

Last Month

Last month, we celebrated the end of our eleventh and a very successful year at our Christmas Party. It was a very nice event with plenty of opportunity to socialize, enjoy great company with similar interests and to get to meet a few new members. We were fortunate to have some new members who started their new memberships by joining us at the party to socialize with us and get to know us in an informal atmosphere. The new members were: Jill Thomson, Richard LeRoy, James Lesch and Loren and Tracy Prucnal. As we get to know them better, we are sure that they will be recognized as good additions to our club.

The party, again, provided some very tasty dishes and dessert treats. There was plenty of food and many interesting conversations. However, things really got interesting during the Jeopardy game. The "B" team was sadly way behind at the half way point. They mounted a significant surge in the second half. It came down to the final Jeopardy question to determine the winners. The "A" team was the eventual winner, but only by 100 points. It provided an exciting finish to a fun night.

We also started the membership renewal phase for the 2008 year. At least 6 families have already submitted their renewals. If you haven't submitted your renewal by the time of this mailing, we will again attach the short renewal form for your convenience. We would, of course, appreciate your early completion of your renewal, to help us better plan for the coming year's activities.

We also announced that we have a new website address. The new address is: <http://www.gvpakc.org> If you have a chance over the holidays

check it out. The new site will help Norm James, our web- master, to make changes and updates plus it gives us a dedicated site.

Coming events

There will be no GVPAKC meeting in the month of January. The Board Members will meet early in the month to set tentative dates and topic areas for the year.

You still have time to enter your ideas and suggestions for meeting topics, visits, activities or other items of interest for consideration at this session until January 10. Please call them in to: Larry Hursh at 473-6276 or Bob Wheeler at 461-5315

The first meeting for the 2008 year will be Friday, February 1st. We hope to have a tentative calendar of events and possible meeting topics for listing in the February newsletter and discussion of them at that meeting. The presentation for that meeting will be noted in the February newsletter.

Looking ahead and toward seeing some flowers, greenery and interesting water features in late winter, save some time between March 13-16 for this year's Garden- Scape flower and garden show. This year's theme is "It's A Garden Life". The title leaves a lot of room for an active imagination to start working. I hope to have more information on the theme and possibly insights into some displays by the February meeting.

Items of Interest

Zoonooz, the newsletter of the Seneca Park Zoological Society, had some interesting information on how well animals can really smell in an article by Lynn Harris, a docent, at the park. I would like to, at least, share some of them that relate to animals that live in, around or feed from the water.

In addition to other navigational aids, fish have the ability to detect odors in water. Salmon, apparently

have such a keen sense of smell that they are able to use it to help them navigate the waters to return to the stream from which they were hatched.

Sharks, a super predator family, can detect one drop of blood in a million drops of water. This is roughly equivalent to detecting one drop of blood in 25 gallons of water. Furthermore, they can smell this blood from a half mile away.

Some of the seabirds hone in on the smell of fish oils to locate their food sources.

Finally, one of my favorite animals, the polar bear, can smell a seal that is under several feet of snow and ice and in many cases is successful in catching it. They can also detect the smell of a dead whale from almost 20 miles away.

It is always fascinating to see how various senses have developed and evolved to keep the various animals and people on a path of survival.

Last year, we made special note that an American owned Koi was selected as best in its female class at the All Japan Koi Show. After spending another season boarding out in Hiroshima, it had grown significantly in length and girth. In an interesting turn of events, it was entered again in this year's show. In the registration, the fish was measured with the tail fin closed. This made the fish 1/4 inch longer. This meant that it had to compete in the next higher and much more competitive class.

This year, "Princess Rose", the Kohaku owned by Andrew Filipowski of the United States, made history again by becoming the first ever American-owned Koi to win consecutive All Japan Koi Show Koku-gyo Prizes.

By way of explanation, "Kokugyo means 'National Fish' and Koi that earn this stature are considered to be a National Treasure in Japan".

(Continued on page 3)

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Koi Insights For Surviving Winter

“--Koi are at their metabolic ideal or optimum between 64-74 degrees F,” so states James Reilly in his article in *KOI USA*. This is the range where a Koi's body, which is approximately the temperature of its water environment, is most efficient. At this point the fish's systems are 'at one' with its surroundings. Beyond this range in either direction, the systems can work either in a less efficient way or can become overactive.

We have all seen how the fish slow down as winter settles in. This becomes even more noticeable as the water gets colder and their muscle movement becomes physically more restricted. At this stage, the Koi rest a lot and move about periodically to forage. Their unusual swimming style in the winter is indicative of the use of different muscles to produce the more hypnotic winter movement. This is also a more energy and fat reserve conserving method of moving in the colder water.

While the Koi's hormones usually set up the patterns for its metabolism, they can also be triggered by other environmental factors like light, temperature and diet.

Old time Japanese breeders would solve the light problem by covering the ponds where fish were kept outdoors with boards and straw. This not only kept the fish in the dark to keep them from being overly stimulated during the winter season, but also kept the cold winds off the Koi and the water warmer. These worked to keep the Koi quiet which allowed their reserves to last longer.

On the other hand, many of us western Koi keepers put on lights or use a flashlight at night to check on their Koi. This is not a good idea, especially where winters are longer which like ours may approach 14-16 weeks. The use of the lights for extended times can stimulate the Koi's systems to think that spring is com-

ing near. This may cause them to prematurely use up some of their reserves.

Excessive water changes or the adding of water can also be a mixed bag. While both may be necessary to maintain water quality or volume, it can be a trigger to suggest that spring may be approaching. This can be even worse when the added water is more than a few degrees warmer than the pond water. These water additions can also disturb the thermal layers or stratification that have gradually developed during the season.

Finally, if your Koi do start to swim about on those sunny and warmer than normal winter days to search for food, it is just nature at work. It may be just as confusing as the effect of stimulating plants to set buds growing too early. There may be some hidden wisdom in this trickery. The Koi have no idea of how long the winter might be. They just follow the environmental feedback. If the warm spell last long enough and their searching for food is fairly consistent, it may be necessary to feed them. This is a rather personal judgement call that must be made by the individual Koi keeper. A light feeding or two may help the fish through a tougher winter period that might still be ahead. However, the results may have little physiological effect since the winter metabolism is set up with reserves. The feeding may also increase fish waste and decay of excess uneaten food. Most adult Koi in good condition at the start of winter can go without food for 9-12 weeks in temperatures below 50 degrees F. This may be extended by their foraging natural food growths within the pond, their ability to conserve energy and reserves with minimal movement and our own efforts to keep from falsely stimulating them as explained above during the winter months.

In his closing paragraph, the author offers this advice. “Like a lot of

things in life, feeding Koi in the winter is a “gray” area question. The black and white dictates not to, but the gray (area) may say ‘sometimes, under certain circumstances.’ As always, wheat germ pellets are the safest way to go.”

Hopefully, now that you have some of the physical and metabolism information about a Koi's winter habits, you will feel a little more comfortable about making the decision of whether or not you want to feed your Koi. But remember that there are things that you can do to lower the stimulation and the anticipation of spring and their desire to be fed.

Something Fishy With Stress Relief

In the past few decades, some research studies have verified that watching fish has a calming effect on the human mind. They showed that it helps to reduce stress levels, tackle insomnia and treat a range of other health issues even high blood pressure.

In a separate Travelodge study, which included 2000 UK consumers, 63% of the nation is sleep deprived due to some type of stress and 58% claimed that watching goldfish could be the answer. Furthermore, 2/3 of the responders said that they associated an aquarium with tranquility and serenity. One third believed that watching the fish swim creates the feeling of serenity. The Goldfish was also voted Britain's top favorite fish.

Based on this information and in a bid to offer its customers an opportunity for a better night's sleep, two of UK's Travelodge hotels are offering the first goldfish for hire service.

Travelers staying at these lodges can request a fish therapy room at no extra charge at the time of check-in. For best results, they are encouraged to follow these guides to relaxation before bedtime and to watch the goldfish for 15 minutes as an aid to de-stressing.

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

The hotel's "De-stress Guide" to help guests relax lists the following:

- Make a list of the tasks you plan for the following day.
- Perform a gentle exercise like yoga to relax your body and meditation to clear your mind.
- Take a warm bath
- Watch the goldfish swim for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- Use "Trigger Pictures" to relax you. Try to visualize a mental image of a favorite place or moment to trigger and deepen the feelings of relaxation, well being and.

According to Wayne Munnely, Director of Sleep at Travelodge, watching goldfish is proving to be a popular choice and is giving those guests a better night's sleep.

If you have time and space why not try this novel approach to stress reduction for yourself. You could even bring in some of your smaller Koi for the winter. This would save them from the rigors of winter plus it would allow them to gain a little more in their growth cycle. The bonus for you, in addition to being less stressed and sleeping better, of course, would be your enjoying watching your fish while others are wondering what is happening to theirs under all that ice and snow.

(The above is based in part on a splash note in *Aquascape* magazine.)

Pond De-icing

Q: Why use a pond de-icer instead of running a pump or an airstone.

A: This can depend a little on your winter plans and what might be easier, best or most comfortable for you.

If your filter is gravity fed or located above ground and in an open area, you could experience an ice build up above the filter media. This might result in the filter overflowing and draining excessive amounts of water from the pond.

Likewise, if you rely solely on an airstone to keep an area of the pond ice free, condensation can build up

within smaller tubing and may freeze. Eventually, the ice may build up to a point where the air flow is nearly or completely cut off. This allows an ice layer to close over the opening.

If you are in a position where you can monitor the pond on a regular basis (1-2 times a day), either system would be acceptable. However, if you will be traveling, spending your winters in a warmer area, or possibly work extended hours that would make routine monitoring difficult or impossible, a pond de-icer might be worth considering for ease and your peace of mind.

Keep in mind that a pond de-icer does not warm much of the water. It only warms the small amount of water adjacent to the unit. This will keep a sufficient opening in the ice to allow the toxic gases to escape. It will not disturb the thermal layers that have naturally developed and are so important to the health comfort and survival of your fish.

Some people use a cattle trough de-icer, they work, but may not be the best choice. A true pond de-icer is manufactured differently than a cattle trough de-icer. They are designed to float and the better ones also have an internal thermostat that is factory preset to turn on and off in the proper temperature range. They are very efficient and are not too expensive to operate.

If you are in an area that suffers from periodic power failures or storm related electrical problems, the de-icer may offer some additional advantages. In a power failure, you should unplug your pump. That way, if the power was off long enough that the water in the lines froze, the sudden surge of water when the power is returned, may cause the hoses to disconnect, may crack some pre-stressed pipes or connections. This can result in a significant loss of water and resultant fish deaths if not detected in a timely manner. In some cases, the pump may not restart which can present a whole series of additional problems.

For those with pond de-icers, the return of power presents no extra concerns. The thermostat safely restarts the heat cycle and gradually opens the hole in the ice. Monitoring should not be necessary and there would be no potential for a water loss.

If you fit in one of the categories of concern, you may want to consider purchasing a de-icer as a back up unit. With luck, if you were present when the power failed, you could turn off the pump and easily slide the de-icer into the existing opening and be ready to go when the power was returned.

Continued from color page.

Wave Hill is a 28-acre public garden and cultural center in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades.

The Water Garden highlights include water lilies, lotus and other aquatic plants. Tropical and hardy water plants and grasses enhance and soften the formal proportions of a garden pool. At its best in late summer through the fall, Aquatic Vine-covered pergolas provide a shady refuge while displaying the range of ways vines climb—twining, clinging and grabbing. Upright plants that grow within the pool and on its margins heighten the garden's graceful formality.

West 249th Street and Independence Avenue (front gate)
675 West 252nd Street (mailing)
Bronx, NY 10471-2899



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 <http://www.gvpakc.org>

Calendar of Events

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

January 4, 2008: There will be no meeting this month. Board Members meeting to be scheduled.

January 11, 2008: NFKPC monthly meeting

February 1, 2008: Our first meeting of the year. Topic and presenter will be announced in the

February 8, 2008: NFKPC monthly meeting

March 7, 2008: Topic to be determined by Board Members

Save the dates:

March 13-16, 2008: GardenScape

June 6-8, 2008: LilyFest with GVPAKC plant and product auction on June 8. We are also trying to find a speaker for a presentation prior to the auction.

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