

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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December 2009

2009 GVPAKC Pond Tour - Brad Berdychs' Pond



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"News From Norm"

Mark Your Calendar

Reminder: Don't forget to mark Friday, December 4th, the date of the Holiday Party, on your calendar! We will once again plan on bringing a dish to pass, according to last name. If your last name begins with A-H, please bring a dessert; I-P a salad; and Q-Z an appetizer. We'll look forward to sharing a meal and to playing a rousing game of Pond Jeopardy!

Renewal Time

As you may notice by the attached renewal form, the end of 2009 brings the start of 2010 and another year for the club. We hope you've had a fun and educational time as members of the club and will renew your membership for another year. If you received a complimentary membership for hosting a pond tour stop last year, we hope you will consider joining the club. On your renewal forms, please make note of any areas of interest that you'd like the club to cover in 2010 during our meetings or in this newsletter. This really helps us plan for presentations that meet your needs.

Election of Officers

First, thanks to Les Saiers for filling the roll of Treasurer for the Club for the past several years. We appreciate the great job he's done keeping the books and paying the bills for us. Next, thanks to Denis Monefeldt for stepping up and volunteering for the position of Treasurer for the 2010 term. That act completed the slate of nominees for the officers for the Genesee Valley Pond and Koi Club for 2010. With one person nominated for each position, the slate of

nominees was accepted to serve. Our officers for 2010 will be: Bob Wheeler, President; Larry Hursh, Vice President; Denis Monefeldt, Treasurer; Jo Anne James, Secretary. In addition, in non-elected roles, Norm James has agreed to continue as Newsletter Editor/Webmaster, and Yvonne Wheeler will continue coordinating refreshments. Thanks to all the volunteers who help keep GVPAKC operating so smoothly.

November Presentation

If you weren't at the November meeting, you missed a wide ranging discussion by Brad Berdych. You may remember that Brad was a host of one of the stops on last year's pond tour. His pond was just newly completed when we visited, and Brad was quick to point out that it now has much more landscaping around the pond. Brad discussed the building of his pond and all the research, much of it on the Internet, he put into designing the pond and selecting the components in his filter system. His Nexus filters are working great now, and one thing that was critical was setting the filters at the same level as the pond. A very small pump is all that is needed to move the water, gravity does most of the work. His sloped backyard also is a boon when it is time to backflush the system. He just opens the gates to backflush the filter, and the hillside takes the runoff, no problem. Planning is important when building your pond. So is site selection, and it's nice when you are lucky to have a site with great features of which you can take advantage. Brad also mentioned that he was able to take advantage of several of his friends in the construction trades. When digging

a large pond, a friend with a mini-excavator comes in handy. So does having a lot of friends when it's time to lay the liner.

Brad's passion, though, wasn't in the pond. It's not a water garden, it's a Koi pond. A few of his Koi were ones that his late father had placed with another person years ago. When that person heard Brad was building a Koi pond, several of the Koi were sent back to Brad, completing a circle as it were. Brad takes great pride in having Koi that are 20 some years old that originally belonged to his father. Brad was also busy this past year buying Japanese Koi through the Internet. Brad said he had great luck buying Koi during the "off season". Brad has tended to buy females, because of their body shape. Interestingly, he has also picked Koi that appeal to his own preferences for color and balance of color within his pond. At this point, his selection is noticeably missing the most common Koi, the Sanke, Showa and Kohaku. Brad said he may add one or more of these Koi to his pond to "balance the color spectrum" of his collection.

When asked if he would do anything differently, Brad said that having the Koi in tanks in the basement over the winter before the pond was constructed was not the most pleasant smell. So, building the pond prior to starting your collection might be a good idea. He also said he made the mistake of rushing to transport a Koi to the pond when he was short on time and had a group of visitors around. The Koi ended up thrashing in the net and damaged a dorsal fin, requiring surgery. While the fin has healed, this Koi would not be "show quality" any longer. So the

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lesson learned is, when handling Koi, make sure the environment is calm, and take your time. □



COLOR PAGE

This month's feature is Brad Berdychs' pond in Irondequoit. His backyard pond is set picturesquely among towering trees. Brilliant koi, collected from breeders in Hawaii, inhabit a 6-7' deep, 25,000 gallon pond that is designed to feature their beauty and protect their well-being. Brad combines a Nexus filtration system that uses kaldness chips, a bead filter that is fed by a skimmer, and a UV light to maintain water quality. A cantilevered deck overlooking the pond allows the fish to display their colors as they swim under your feet. □



GVPAKC CLASSIC
The following article originally appeared in the February 1999 GVPAKC newsletter.

Additional Winter Insurance for \$2.00 by Larry Nau

For the past four years we have successfully prevented our pond from freezing over by using aeration. This has been reliably accomplished by a simple Tetra Luft Pump pumping to a 4" airstone submerged about 10" into the water. A good portion of the pond remains ice free, except during the longest periods of extreme cold during January.

This January brought winter back with a vengeance. After the warmest December on record, with only .1" of snow, we knew it was too good to last! Everyone in Western New York still has that week of continuous snow fresh in their memories. Of course,

that was coupled with extreme cold and wind chills of -30 F. The ponds froze - and froze fast!

During one lull in the series of storms I trudged out back to check on the main pond. It was totally sealed with ice. This certainly was no surprise given the extreme conditions we were experiencing. I shoveled off the 20"+ of snow on the corner where the airstone was located. I took seven - 4 gallon buckets of boiling water out to the pond to melt the ice. Remember our pond is over 100 feet from the house so it was great aerobic exercise. To my surprise, the airstone was not working. I uncovered the pump (contained in a wooden box) and it appeared to be working fine. I found an old airstone in the house and brought it out to replace the old one. There was a mild stream of bubbles enough to get me by through the night.

The next day the pond was frozen up again. After 3 more buckets of water we once again had an ice free zone. Now I brought in the pump to check it out. My inspection revealed the hinge to the airstone was broken. Therefore, the pump could not produce the air pressure needed. It's like trying to jump with 2 broken legs, it cannot happen!

I replaced the pump and airstone. The new pump came with a check valve, but since it was dark I did not take the time to install it. The next day more ice, no air, more hot water!!!

I looked at everything and found the source of my problem under the blanket of snow. Ice was in the airline and preventing the air to pass through. I defrosted the ice blockages and shook out the water. I also installed the check valve to prevent water from back siphoning into the line. We are now back to normal. To date, the pond has remained ice free and the 'ice free zone' is gradually

expanding.

What I assumed happened was the following:

The original pump failed and the water back siphoned into the airline. It froze, but since it was under the snow I never saw the ice blockages. The new pump initially had enough pressure to pass some air through, but eventually it too stopped. Once all the water and ice were removed we were back to normal.


There are a number of lessons to be learned from my experience. First: install a check valve to prevent back siphoning into your air pump. If your air pump sits at or below the water level, it is likely the water will back siphon into the pump if it should stop. Electrical power loss is the most common reason for pumps to stop and back siphons to occur. I know of many aquarium keepers to which this has happened before check valves were produced. Such an electrical failure may have caused my original pump to stop, and water to freeze in the line. When the power came back on, the pump could not pass air through the ice. Therefore, due to the backpressure produced, the pump's hinge and/or diaphragm broke. An additional danger is the possibility for the back siphon to drain your pond down to the depth of your airstone.

Try to check your pond daily to make sure everything is working. I would suggest replacing your airstone at least once a year to insure they are not clogged and produce unwanted backpressure to your air pump. It's also helpful to have an oversized water heater to supply hot water to melt through those thick ice packs.

So how are the 45 koi? I suspect they all O.K. Our pond contains about 13,000 gallons of water and is 5 feet deep in the main portion of the pond. Since 90% of the pond is still frozen

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over, I cannot see the fish through the "peep hole". The ice is certainly the thickest I have ever seen it. It is at least 8 to 10 inches at the open water interface! So we wait until spring when we once again will hopefully enjoy our jeweled friends! Our friends whose lives are in peril because of a simple \$1.89 check valve. □

 **GVPACK CLASSIC**
The following article originally appeared in the October 1998 GVPACK newsletter.

Northern Exposure

reprinted with permission from MAKC by James Reilly

There's no doubt about it, the 1991 (1998 in our case) Koi Season is rapidly drawing to a close. The month of November is a busy time of the year for the Koi Keeper here in the northeast. It is typically the last month we will feed our koi and our attentions quickly turn to securing our ponds for winter.

As the seasons change and evening temperatures drop, I try to keep a few basic rules and laws of nature in mind. Being a naturalist at heart, it's not surprising the Darwin's law of survival of the fittest comes to mind as I make it a point to observe my koi carefully each day, trying to detect any weak or injured koi. This ritual especially applies to any newly purchased or imported fish. If a fish appears less active than the others, spends too much time alone, doesn't eat well or has the slightest wound or sore, then it is moved to an indoor facility for the winter. Since the koi's immunological system is almost non-existent at temperatures below 58° the chances of a wound or bruise becoming infected are high. By moving the fish to the indoor pond, the healing process can continue and medications- if needed- can be

administered. Along those same lines, any fish returning from our fall show which is slow to begin feeding again will also spend the winter inside. Darwin also is credited with the statement "only the strong survive." All small fish (5" or less) are routinely moved indoors in late October. I do this for two reasons. IN the northeast, most fish won't have a chance to feed again for 4 months and I feel this long fast could adversely affect the fry's overall development; and, secondly, some little guys just don't have enough body mass to last the long winter. I know many of the young ones would probably make it through, but I'd like to be the one to cull my fry - not old man winter! It always seems the strong ugly ones out last their promising sibling... another one of Charles Darwin's laws of nature at work, I suppose.

Any fancy goldfish are also assumed to be too delicate to withstand winter conditions and are also moved inside.

Darwin's friend, Murphy, also has a law. He said, "if anything can go wrong it will". So, assume this winter will be something just short of the next ice age. Keep records from each season on air and water temperatures and use a check list to avoid surprises. Check to see if your floating pond heater is still working before the first frost. A check list and record dates can insure that you won't be found searching the shelves of a 7-11 store on Sunday afternoon for berry netting while your pond is slowly filling with leaves and your favorite football team has just scored against the Washington Redskins!(or Buffalo Bills in our case!) Records can also include winter water change schedules, medication doses, pond cover construction notes and a general diary on previous season's disasters and successes. To further keep that guy Murphy in check, plan

to drain all lines that can freeze before ice forms on the pond surface. (Ask Larry about what happens when you wait!!!) Of course, this involves the pond's overall shut down and, therefore, can't be done until feeding has been discontinued and the filter is cleaned out. □

Gift Idea for the Water Gardener
Special price for the Thermoplanter 1000 heated pot for tropical water lilies for the upcoming season. The Special price is \$28.00 each (regular price is 49.99) and is just for the month of December. Helps to start growth earlier in the spring and overwinter tropical lilies in the fall. If you are interested go to www.blackrivernurseries.com and enter promotional code wgc1000 for the club discount. □

If something has been bugging you, we'll try to get an answer. Please send your questions to Norm at gvpakc@rochester.rr.com or phone 334-3536. Then check out future issues of the newsletter to read what our "experts" have to say.



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club
140 Winslow Ave,
Rochester NY 14620

Board Members 2009

President: Bob Wheeler
Vice President: Larry Hursh
Secretary: Jo Anne James
Treasurer: Les Saiers
Pond Tour Chairperson: Les Saiers & Norm James
Refreshments: Yvonne Wheeler
Newsletter Editors: N James, B Wheeler and L Hursh,
Webmaster: Norm James - gvpakc@rochester.rr.com

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 Bob Wheeler. (585) 461-5315 or e-mail BobWheeler58@gmail.com or visit the club website at <http://www.gvpakc.org>

Calendar of Events

December 4 Meeting: Friday 7PM GVPAKC
Holiday Party.

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

January 1 2010: No meeting in January

February 5 2010, Meeting: Friday 7PM, GVPAKC
meeting at Warner Castle

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