



# Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 06

June 2011

## Bog Plants



Golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*)



Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia speciosa*)



Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*)

# Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

## “News From Norm”

### May Meeting

Club Treasurer, Denis Monefeldt, presented his thoughts about the topic, “Maintaining a Watergarden isn’t Neutral.” Both new and experienced pond keepers came away with a greater respect for the role bacteria play in the balance and health of their watergardens. Thank you, Denis. □

### Summer Schedule

Well its that time of year again - summer (OK, so it's seemed like April for most of May but warmer and sunny days are just ahead). With summer, our normal first Friday meetings at Warner Castle shift around due to holidays and special club events.

**June** - No meeting Friday, June 3rd. Instead, join us at Lilyfest at Bergen Water Gardens and Nursery on Saturday, June 4th, and Sunday, June 5th, 7443 Buffalo Road, Churchville. Lilyfest discounts on selected merchandise and discounts for GVPAKC members. On Sunday, June 5th, the Club plant and product auction will be held at 1:00. Bring your donations to be auctioned to benefit the club. Additional merchandise from various manufacturers will be auctioned by Ray "Kingfish" Lucas. Invite your friends who may be interested in starting a water garden. The auction is open to all. Come out and help the Club and get a great deal for yourself, too!

**July** - No meeting Friday, July

1st, due to the 4th of July holiday weekend. The meeting has been rescheduled to the second Friday, July 8th, at **6:00PM**. We're taking a special road trip meeting to Willow Ponds Aqua Farm at 3581 Swamp Road, Canandaigua. We will be hosted by Willow Ponds Director Michelle Hess. She will give us an overview of the products and services offered by Willow Ponds. The retail store will be open late just for us. If you've never been to Willow Ponds, this is a great opportunity to join other Club members and make the trip to explore what Willow Ponds has to offer. Carpool and grab an early or late dinner on the way with friends. Enjoy the late summer evenings.

**August** - No meeting Friday August 5th. The Pond Tour and picnic will be held on Saturday, August 6th. We've lined up 7 ponds so far, and it looks like another great pond tour. Watch for additional details in future newsletters. Remember the Pond Tour is free, but it is limited to GVPAKC members, pond hosts and their guests. Membership has its privileges! When you join the club for the first time, your dues are prorated based on the month you join. Becoming a member includes the pond tour, a great deal.

**September** - No meeting Friday, September 2nd, due to the Labor Day weekend. The meeting has been rescheduled to the second Friday, September 9th.

Remember to use those 5-in-1 pond test strips Denis handed out

after his presentation at the last meeting. See how your water measures up; and remember that it does change over the season, so test more than once.

Until the next meeting. Happy Ponding!  
Bob Wheeler, President □



### May Newsletter Correction

A few days ago I received the following email from Bob Nash. He was responding to a feature article in the May Newsletter. I thought you might find it interesting.

**Subject:** What's in a Name?

The May 2011 Newsletter featured an article on the Asagi koi. The heading of this article offered the following pronunciation guide for the name of this koi: Ah-Sog-Ee. Since Japanese and English vowel sounds are distinctly different, it is truly difficult to capture the correct Japanese pronunciation using English script. Additionally, the two languages differ markedly with respect to stress, with Japanese being almost free of stress. In this regard, Ah-Sog-Ee transforms Asagi into three phonemes when in fact the Japanese word Asagi is actually based on only two kanji characters: ASA and GI. (Foreigners often stress the middle phoneme when trying to pronounce a Japanese word: e.g., Ah-**Sog**-Ee ---- this is termed the "potato accent"!). Of course, it

## Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

helps to know just what component kanji characters make up any particular Japanese word ---- e.g. HIROSHIMA consists of two kanji HIRO ( 広 ) and SHIMA ( 島 ), meaning "wide island". To a Western ear, the correct pronunciation, then, sounds like HE.ROW ---- SHE.MA. Incorrectly, many Westerners say HE --- **ROSH** --- EEMA.

For ASAGI, the relevant kanji characters are ASA ( 浅 ) and GI ( 黄 ), meaning "pale blue". (Japanese colors can be a little strange ----- KI/GI actually means "yellow", but when paired with ASA it becomes pale blue!) Anyway, for the two kanji, a close English pronunciation would be: AH.SAH ----- GHEE, just two phonemes.

Of course, the decoding of kanji characters is a slippery slope ---- somewhat similar to ASAGI is the well-known Japanese beer: ASAHI, pronounced AH.SAH --- HEE (not AH.SAH ---- HIGH!) The kanji for ASAHI are: ASA ( 朝 ) and HI ( 日 ), meaning "morning sun". Note the different kanji for ASA ---- same pronunciation, but very different meaning for ASA-koi and ASA-beer!

If you ever get the chance to interact with native Japanese koi fanciers, you'll greatly impress them if you can use the correct Japanese pronunciation ---- the Japanese always appreciate foreigners who have evidently tried to master the "sounds" of Japanese.

Cheers,

Bob Nash

(a survivor of three years spent

working in Japan)



### How To Look After Your Pond and Koi While You're On Holiday

With thanks to Ben Helm for this article

[www.watergardenersbible.co.uk](http://www.watergardenersbible.co.uk)

I've just realized why I have such fond memories of my summer holidays as a child; they were not my responsibility to organize. I was blissfully unaware of all the arrangements that my parents had to make for both home and abroad.

Not so now! Once you've organized flights, accommodation, car hire and holiday insurance, thoughts then turn to responsibilities at home. Having no pets, all my parents were concerned with was getting the houseplants watered while we were on holiday. How things change. As a parent myself, in addition to the house plants, we have numerous furred and finned animals that all need to be cared for while we are away. We can take cat to relatives or even a cattery - simple enough, but what are our options when leaving a koi pond for a fortnight in the summer?

How do we best ensure the health (and more recently, security) of our pond in our absence so that we can completely detach ourselves from the domestic responsibilities that we have left back in Blighty?

Koi club membership.

Being a member of your local koi

club offers many benefits, especially when going away on holiday. In fact, it is arguably worth the annual membership fee alone to know that you could have access to willing and able koi enthusiasts who would look left after your pond as though it were their own while you're away. Needless to say, you will also be able to return the favor. But if you're not a member of a local koi club what are your alternatives?

Who else?

My first choice would be a nearby friend or close neighbor who was also a pond keeper. They will naturally have a keen eye for spotting any potential issues while you're away and because they are likely to be enjoying their own pond on a daily basis, they are less likely to forget about yours. Alternatively, speak to a willing neighbor who would be happy (and interested) to keep an eye over your pond for two weeks. But bear in mind, your instructions and directions will have to be more detailed and precise as in effect you will be entrusting your pond to an inexperienced novice.

By involving your neighbor, you can also more easily address issues of security. They will keep your front lawn trimmed, keep an eye out for any strange behavior and perhaps if they have a second car even park on your driveway. Security of koi ponds has become a hot topic over recent years, so tell as few people as possible about your impending vacation. Just before you fly.

There are a number of ways in which you can prepare your pond

## Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

before flying out that will make life easier for both your stand-in and your fish. Because you will be absent for the next two weeks or so, you will need to prepare your pond beforehand, creating a two week maintenance-free period for when you are away. Only you know the specific areas of your pond that require most regular maintenance, so if possible, work extra hard on these areas, creating a period of grace before things have to be maintained again; ideally, only after you've returned. Basically, you need to get everything freshened up before you go.

- a. Water changes. Rather than the usual the fortnightly water change, consider doing two in the preceding fortnight. This is better than doing a big one too close to your departure date, as this may affect your pond's stability, having a knock-on effect for your koi which may manifest itself as a health problem while you're away.
- b. Media maintenance. Likewise, combine your water changes with extra rigorous mechanical media maintenance. You know how frequently this needs changing or cleaning before flow rates are affected, so plan accordingly. If possible, why not have some pre-cleaned media standing by to be dropped into your filter by your neighbor in place of one-week-old mechanical media. The bio-chambers should look after themselves over this period.
- c. Pump Prefilter. If your pump has a pre-filter (or a habit of blocking up) then clean it just before leaving. If blanketweed

is the culprit, then remove as much by hand before leaving and ensure your favorite blanket weed control treatment has been added recently.

Things you should do just before you fly.

Your priority while you are away is to maintain a satisfactory and stable water quality, and to keep your neighbor's role as pond guardian as simple and straightforward as possible.

Consequently do not do any of the following immediately prior to your holiday.

- a. Add a preventative fish treatment to your pond. These may have an adverse effect on your fish while you're away. If your fish are under treatment prior to leaving, leave your neighbor with a pre-measured doses and precise instructions on when to dose while you are away.
- b. Add new fish. If you have a quarantine system, this should be empty of fish while you are away. Plan well in advance of your holiday so that no new fish are in quarantine or have recently been added to your pond. Newly introduced koi are more likely to suffer settling-in health problems, which again your neighbor is not likely to spot or know what to do with if they occur in your absence.
- c. New hardware. New pumps or filter systems will operate in slightly different ways to your redundant hardware, requiring your experienced eye to ensure that they are run-in well and with no detrimental effects to your pond or koi. So leave your system untouched for the

weeks preceding your holiday so that you're familiar and confident with your system's operation.

What should your neighbor look out for?

The logic in asking a close neighbor to look after your koi is that you should expect them to carry out a daily check on your pond. Give them a daily checklist together with guidance on what to do in certain circumstances.

If you want your koi to be fed over the vacation (they should manage without food for two weeks) then put set portions to one side in sealed containers or bags. You can't predict the weather so there is a risk of overfeeding if the weather is poor while you're away. Why not provide food for alternate days as this will spare your filter the usual loading, making maintenance less likely while you're getting tanned. Rather than burden your neighbor with the responsibility of feeding (although this is a useful reward and motivation for them to check and your pond regularly) you could invest in an auto feeder. However, if you're not used to using one, it may be difficult to set it accurately so that it provides your fish with the quantity of food they are used to. As before, if you are in any doubt and if it involves using new hardware, it is better to stick to tried and trusted methods while you are away.

Water testing?

If you have prepared your pond, filter system and feeding regime then you would not expect your water quality to deteriorate, making it unnecessary for your

# Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

neighbor to test your pond water while you're away. Anyway, would you trust them to spot a problem, interpret results and respond as required if they do find a problem with your water? I find that by giving a volunteer a few, it easy-to-follow yet fundamental tasks to do, they will do them well (and this does not include testing water).

Just before you leave.

Invite your neighbor to come and see your pond to become very familiar with it. Go through your brief instructions and check that they understand everything. If your instructions involve any hands-on maintenance, then ask your neighbor to do a dummy run (eg rinsing filter media, cleaning pump pre-filters etc).

Leave them with a contact number for you abroad (hotel/apartment) that he can call if he is in any doubt as to what to do. It is far better for your neighbor to call and ask questions rather than act out of the purest motives only to regrettably do the wrong thing.

Things to do before going on holiday.

- Carry out two partial water changes one week before departing.
- Ensure your pond is filled to capacity.
- Confirm that your water quality is as near-perfect as possible.
- Carry out any filter maintenance one week before departing (eg mechanical media)
- Remove excess blanketweed or pond sediment manually and by

pond vacuum during a final partial water change.

- Erect a permanent protection against herons as these shy predators will have two weeks of virtually uninterrupted fishing time.
- If you have opted to feed, then prepare pre-packed portions of food marked for each day or if you prefer, for alternate days.
- Invite your neighbor over for a run-through of your instructions.
- Leave written instructions and contact details in case of emergencies.
- Don't forget your passport and foreign currency/travelers checks

Jobs to do. - Neighbor's Checklist  
Daily:

- Check that the flow rate through the pump/filter/waterfall is satisfactory.
- Check that all koi are feeding and showing signs of normal behavior
- Feed (if a portion of prepared food has been set aside for today) and if weather has been OK
- Check that the air diffusers are active and fully working.

Every Few Days:

- Check that the intake to the pump is clear of debris.
- Confirm that the flow through the mechanical chambers is not impeded. Remove any accumulation of blanketweed and other

debris from the pond.

After 1st Week:

- Remove old mechanical media and replaced with new pre-washed prepared media.

□



If your mailing address or email change or you would like to receive your newsletter via email, please send your change to: [newsletter@gvpakc.org](mailto:newsletter@gvpakc.org), or call Norm James at 334-3536.

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

### Our Sponsors

**MARS**  
fishcare



<http://www.marsfishcare.com/>

## BERGEN WATER GARDENS AND NURSERY

7443 Buffalo Road  
Churchville, NY 14428  
585-293-2860

<http://www.bergenwatergardens.com>

### Board Members 2011

President: Bob Wheeler  
Vice President: Larry Hursh  
Secretary: Open  
Treasurer: Denis Monefeldt  
Pond Tour Chairperson: Norm James  
Refreshments: Yvonne Wheeler  
Newsletter Editors: N James, B Wheeler and L Hursh,  
Webmaster: Norm James - [gvpakc@rochester.rr.com](mailto: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](mailto:BobWheeler58@gmail.com) or visit the club website at

<http://www.gvpakc.org>

### Calendar of Events

**June** - No meeting Friday, **June 3rd**. Instead, join us at Lilyfest at Bergen Water Gardens and Nursery on Saturday, **June 4th**, and Sunday, **June 5th**, 7443 Buffalo Road, Churchville. Lilyfest discounts on selected merchandise and discounts for GVPKAC members. On **Sunday, June 5th**, the Club plant and product auction will be held at 1:00. Bring your donations to be auctioned to benefit the club. Additional merchandise from various manufacturers will be auctioned by Ray "Kingfish" Lucas. Invite your friends who may be interested in starting a water garden. The auction is open to all. Come out and help the Club and get a great deal for yourself, too!

**July** - No meeting Friday, July 1st, due to the 4th of July holiday weekend. The meeting has been rescheduled to the second Friday, **July 8th, at 6:00PM**. We're taking a special road trip meeting to Willow Ponds Aqua Farm at 3581 Swamp Road, Canandaigua.

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