

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 10

October 2011

2011 GVPAKC Pond Tour Brad and Cindy Pond



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

“News From Norm”

September Meeting

Bob Wheeler offered many timely tips on preparing our ponds for the coming fall and winter seasons. Below are the details from his presentation. □



POND CLOSING

External preparations

- Following proper closing procedures is the best thing that you can do now for next season.
- Monitor temperatures to determine schedules for starting winter bubbler, removing and maintaining plants, feeding fish, turning off waterfalls and streams and discontinuing filtration.
- Start around the outside of the pond and gradually work in to the center.
- Cover the pond with netting to minimize debris entering the water as soon as leaves start to fall and leave it in place until external clean-up has been completed. After external preparations, remove net to prepare pond plants, remove debris and equipment.
- Cover the pond with net or plastic. Either material should be supported well above the water to minimize possibility of trapping fish and other wildlife. Cover should be stretched tightly and firmly anchored, allow an area for ventilation when using plastic covering.
- Remove and store tender tropicals before first frost or before extended cold periods. Some of the tropicals can be

wintered over indoors as house plants.

- If you had a problem with string algae, continue to treat with algaecide. String algae continue to grow through the cold weather until it is killed by loss of light under heavier snow cover.

Plants

- Plant materials are the # 1 cause of decay problems. Eliminate and remove tree and plant leaves as they reduce the oxygen levels and increase CO₂ levels and generate other gases as they break down. Extra plant materials can create a struggle between good and bad bacteria. The extra debris that they generate also provides hiding spaces for parasites.
- Check plant pots/baskets before moving them since some may have become brittle and could break when you start to remove them from the water.
- Marsh and bog plants can be cut back but because of their high moisture content may need some protection. Plants can be mulched after the ground freezes.
- Remove and discard surface/floating plants, especially tropicals. Properly dispose of plant materials to avoid contaminating natural waterways. Hyacinths are especially a problem since their roots are very persistent and can cause problems with boats and water intake screens before they break down.
- Remove excess submerged plants. A few more hardy ones, like parrot feather, may be left and may survive if moved to deeper water.
- Trim marginal plants about 2" above the highest water level that you anticipate. The stems can provide additional air channels for gas exchanges.
- Some marginals may require moving to deeper water. Lotus and pickerel rush will not survive if they freeze. Caution: plants with hollow stems (lotus, some cattails, etc.) will rot if water flows through the stem before it dies back and seals itself (Lotus leaves start to yellow and die back in September or October. They can be cut back and allowed to dry before moving to lower water that will provide at least 12" of free water space between the bottom of the ice and the top of the pot.)
- Trim back hardy water plants. Hardy lilies should be declining and leaves may be yellowing. Cut back the majority of the leaves and blossoms. Leave a few of the smallest leaves which should winter over in deeper water and jump start the plant in spring.
- Tropical water lilies are probably still growing and blossoming. They can remain in the pond until nipped by frost or are otherwise stressed to form a bulb, usually by the end of October. Remove from the pond, unpot the plant, wash off the soil and look for a firm, nut like tuber. Store the tuber in moist sand or other sterile media in a cool dark place. Restart the tuber in April.
- If your pond is very shallow and may freeze solid, wait until the frost has killed all of the foliage but before, the pond starts to freeze, then remove all the plants from the pond and store them in dark plastic container. Place them

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

in a cool but not freezing location.

Water, filters and plumbing

- Keep active beneficial bacteria. New Autumn preparation formulas are active below 55 degrees and may even remain active throughout the winter season. These are usually two part systems-one is the bacteria and the other is an additive breaks down cellulose. If frozen, they should reactivate after thawing out. The shelf life is approximately 3 seasons with proper storage.
- Maintain water quality and water levels as best as possible through the season.
- By-pass or disconnect streams and waterfalls. It is risky to run them during the winter since they may freeze or overflow causing water losses. They can also cool the water at a more rapid rate. A bottom drain should also be by-passed since it may interfere with the stratification of the water.
- Filters and UV sterilizers can continue to run for a period of time but may not be necessary or effective below 55 degrees.
- Skim or vacuum excessive wastes and debris from the top and bottom of the pond, if present. If using a powered skimmer, disconnect, drain and seal openings to prevent ice damage.
- When the water temperature drops below 50 and two weeks have elapsed since the last feeding, the filter and other equipment can be shut down, cleaned and stored. Equipment can be cleaned with a 50/50 mix of water and Clorox2 (not

regular Clorox). Wash 2 times then rinse thoroughly.

- Drain all plumbing lines that might freeze. Some can be protected by insulating materials.
- Store submersible pumps in water in a place that will not freeze. If possible external pumps should also be drained to prevent freeze damage.
- Prepare, to maintain an opening in the ice with a bubbler device or air stone. These should be positioned so that they circulate the water about a foot or more above the bottom of the pond and several inches below the bottom of the ice. Heaters are also available and-new lower Wattage devices are available that are effective to zero. If solid ice does form do not break it by pounding on it. The noise and concussion are dangerous to the fish. If necessary use warm water to melt a hole in the ice or try using an ice fishing auger.

Fish

- Inspect daily and remove and treat any sick or injured fish.
- Provide additional cover and hiding places especially after plants are trimmed or removed. Clay tiles and weighted PVC pipes are possible choices.
- Minimize pump action/water turbulence so the fish do not waste precious energy fighting the current. Also avoid sudden movements around the pond as this can cause them to dart around and waste energy.
- Add pond salt or a slime coat

stimulator material. The fishes immune system is almost inactive below 60. For best chance of winter survival, gold fish should have a depth of 18"-30" and koi should have 30"-48".

- Fish metabolism slows down significantly as the water cools. It may take 2-3 days to process the food that they eat. Feed a minimum amount and the proper foods. Do not feed higher protein foods when water temperature is in the 60-70 degree range.
- 55-60 degrees feed 1x per day with wheat germ type pellet with low protein as a supplement.
- 50-55 degrees feed no more than 2x per week using wheat germ food only. Cheerios and cooked spaghetti can be used but do so sparingly.
- 50 degrees and below do not feed. They may graze on algae and rely on fat reserves. They may beg but will survive.
- Watch weather reports to avoid feeding late when there may be a sudden temperature change that could affect the pond especially in smaller pond volumes.
- Bringing fish inside can be a difficult alternative. Koi require a fairly large tank since they will continue to grow and need more room to exercise to reach their full potential. Matching water quality and temperature as you move them out in fall and back in spring can be a significant problem; The shock and stress of netting and moving them can also be detrimental. Finally, at least in our part of the country, the fish could be inside for 6-8 months and would require considerable maintenance during that time.

□

Dividing and Repotting Hardy Water Lilies

Mature waterlilies like to be somewhat crowded in their pots. However, if your lily has grown out over the side of its container and has roots dangling in the water, it is time to divide or move it up one pot size. They may need to be divided every 2 to 3 years depending on the container size. A major bonus however is that you can end up with more hardy water lilies than you started out with.

Use wide shallow water plant containers without holes. For the average to large size water lily, a 5 to 7 gallon container is ideal and a small water lily can be potted in 3 to 5 gallon container.

Some say that spring time is the best time of year to divide lilies but they can be divided almost any time of year other than winter.

Step 1 - Remove the hardy water lily from the existing plant container and rinse the roots with water to remove excess dirt and debris.



Step 2 - Trim away any damaged or dead leaves. Use a knife to cut away any soft or rotted portions of the tuber. If there are new "eyes" along the tuber

you can snip them off and pot them if you wish.

Step 3 - Smaller varieties can be cut to 2 to 3 inches in length. Larger varieties need a 5 to 6 inch tuber. You may want to trim off some or all of the old roots except the emerging new white roots. Remember to also cut off new flower buds and older leaves, so that the new root system has a chance to develop.

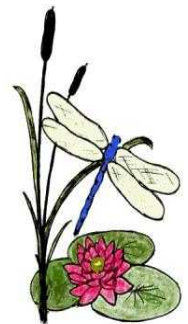


Step 4 - Gently place the tuber in a planting pot, containing a quality water gardening soil, suitable for use in aquatic garden ponds or in good garden soil, not commercial potting soil. Some people use clay cat litter for planting. Do not use amended soil or potting soils as they will float. It is best to place the cut end of the tuber against the wall of the pot rather than in the center of the pot. Tilt the tuber at a 45-degree angle so that the growing tip is will be above the soil level. Feed the new tuber by placing a couple of aquatic plant fertilizer tablets, about halfway into the soil. Pack the tuber firmly into place, with some more soil. This will help to keep the tuber in place. Cover the soil with a layer of pea gravel, which will prevent fish from digging at the tuber and will

also prevent the soil from floating away. Make sure that the crown of the tuber is not covered. If you have large koi you may want to try tying a coarse plastic net over the pot to keep your koi from digging the tuber out.



Step 5 - Gently lower the pot containing the tuber into your pond, to a depth of no deeper than 1 foot. You will probably notice dirt residue mixing with the pond water; this is normal and will soon settle on the pond floor. Leave water lily tubers alone until you see half a dozen or so new leaves. Once this happens you can now place it in deeper water if need be; dependent upon the species and the depth of water preferred. Fertilize the water lily every month with the same amount of fertilizer during the growing season. □



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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>

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

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

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

October 7, 2011, Meeting: Friday 7PM, GVPKAC meeting at Warner Castle.

November 4, 2011, Meeting: Friday 7PM, GVPKAC meeting at Warner Castle. A talk by Scott Hughes of Twin Oaks Lawn and Landscaping.

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