



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 12

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Edible Pond Plants



Most parts of the Cattail or *Typha* (above) are edible. The young shoots of the cattails and the white stems inside the lower leaves can be eaten like celery, or cut into pieces and steamed. In early spring you can find the young spikes hidden in a leaflike sheath. Break off the heads and boil in water for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from water, cover with butter, salt and eat like an ear of corn. When the heads first appear above the leaves, they are loaded with pollen (left). Shake the pollen off and mix with flour to make muffins or breads. The roots can be gathered and used as a starchy vegetable year-round.

Yellow Pond Lily or *Nuphar advena* (right) seeds are a novel treat to the taste buds after they are dried and popped like corn.

Rushes and Sedges produce seeds that can be dried and ground into flour, or cooked as cereal. The roots can be boiled, roasted, or eaten raw. In the spring, the tender stems and leaves are delicious and nutritious, eaten raw in salads.

Arrowhead, Duck Potato, Wild Potato or *Sagittaria latifolia* (right) has been used for a long time as a food source. By fall, the root-stalks have produced edible starchy tubers. These are lavender and brown in color, and they vary in size from a pea to a hen's egg. They are used like potatoes and have a nutty taste. Try to dislodge the tubers by digging in the mud away from the base of the plant. The dislodged tubers will float to the surface.



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

Unfortunately, another pond season is ending and so is our club year. To assure our continuation into the coming year, we did hold our elections at the November meeting. Due to the sparsity of additional volunteers and candidates the current Officers and Board members were re-elected for another term. They are looking forward to serving you for another year and they will try to provide another year of interesting topics and events. They will be meeting sometime between early December and mid January to prepare a tentative schedule of topics and events for 2006. To aid them in this process and to keep the meetings interesting for everyone, if you have any suggestions or special items that you would like to see on the schedule or presented in a future newsletter please contact one of the Officers or Board members before December 12. It is our hope that with your input we will be able to include a tentative schedule in the January newsletter for your review. We will then discuss any possible changes or updates at the February meeting and hopefully confirm and approve most of the items at that time.

The presentations on edible water and landscape plants at last month's meeting went very well. What was an even bigger success however, was the sample tastings of both the water plants and party recipes that were provided by some of the members. Some of them brought back memories of past picnic and Christmas potluck parties. If you couldn't make the meeting, we hope that we have piqued your curiosity to sample some of these dishes and that you will try to attend this year's Christmas Party on December 9th. at 7:00

pm in the Castle. Please note that this is the second Friday of the month instead of our usual first Friday meeting date.

This will again be a potluck type party with the club providing the meat dishes and beverages and the members will be requested to bring side dishes according to the following schedule based on the first letter of your family name. A-H bring an appetizer, Q-Z bring a salad or vegetable dish and I-P bring a dessert. We will open the Castle around 6:30 to allow more time for you to socialize and also to provide ample time to set up the various food dishes. Our entertainment will be the usual pond jeopardy game that will review some of the information and trivia from this year's newsletters and meetings. We hope to simplify the responses this year to increase the fun and learning experience that this game can provide. There will also be prizes for the winners. Please call Yvonne Wheeler at 461-5315 or Kathy Hursh at 473-6276 by December 6th to let us know if you are interested in attending and to verify the dish that you will be bringing. Slight changes regarding the letter guidelines may be necessary to keep the menu in balance.

The Christmas Party not only signals the end of our ninth year but more importantly it is the start of our tenth year. We hope that you will continue to join us this year by renewing your memberships early. This is especially important since without a January meeting there is one less monthly meeting for you to renew in person. To further assist you in completing the renewal process, we have attached the short form of the renewal blank with this month's newsletter. You may return the completed form with your check payable to Genesee Valley Pond And Koi Club for \$25. (Just a gentle reminder that the prorated fees are for new mem-

berships only.) You can renew at the Christmas Party or you can mail your renewal to: GVPAKC 58 Azalea Rd. Rochester, NY 14620-3020.

A special note from AKCA and KOIUSA regarding **time critical information**. They have published a new Koi ID poster. It will be included for all current subscribers in the Nov/Dec issue of KOIUSA. All new subscribers registered during Nov. and Dec. will also receive a copy of this poster when their subscription starts. Furthermore, since the trial period for the reduced subscription rate will expire around March 2006, now would be the ideal time to start your subscription to this interesting and helpful magazine. If you are already a subscriber, you can also extend your current subscription at the reduced rates and the additional years of the renewal will be added to the end of your current subscription expiration date.

I found the following analogy in *Aquascape Lifestyles* to be quite useful in understanding the phenomena of "super-cooling" of pond water by waterfalls and streams. Super-cooling may occur whenever there is a drastic air temperature change that dramatically drops the water temperature and may cause potential fish health problems. It is similar to pouring (your waterfall or stream action) coffee from cup to cup to cool it. The cooling effect is accelerated.

Another interesting article was published in *Mid-Atlantic Koi* by Dr. Eric Johnson. His article opens with the following statement. "It is commonly asked if Koi and Comets can hybridize, and indeed they can. We don't think that it is intentional, but instead it is the accidental fertilization of one species' roe by the other species' milt." So far they don't

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know if the cross can proceed both ways or if it must follow a specific Koi X Comet donor pattern.

The offspring are huge and simply outgrow their siblings. Although the colors (mostly a solemn brown or a grey) and patterns (cinnamon spots) now are fairly plain some are showing some improved markings. Blue Ridge Fish Hatchery has created some Hybrids that were Doitsu, Grey Ghosts.

They seem to be incredibly hardy in general, but due to the absence of babies from those kept in one collection, they may be sterile.

Q: What distinguishes a Hybrid from a real Comet or a real Koi?

A: The Hybrid is built and sized like a Koi, however, it has no barbels. These factors are all significant in identifying a possible Hybrid. Size wise, some of the Hybrids in the collection are "nearing twenty-something inches in length."

This is a very interesting change in past thoughts about such a Hybrid cross occurring in nature. It would be interesting to see if, over time, some of our ponds that have mixture of Koi and Comets also produce some Hybrids. We will try to keep our members advised if and when we find additional information on this. We would also appreciate hearing from anyone who may have or witnessed such offspring especially if it might be possible to obtain photos of such a hybrid.

We have frequently mentioned the medicinal treatment of various fish health problems. However, when it came to discussing more radical treatments like injections and surgery, these topics were beyond the experiences that most of us have had so we simply mentioned them and moved on to other topics. I have now found additional information and insights into some of the things involved in fish surgery in an article by Dr. Eric Johnson in *Aquascape*

Lifestyles. These are some of the points that seemed most interesting to me .

Prior to the early 90's, fish surgery was mostly a research and educational tool with little regard for recovery or survival. Of course many of the researchers knew that sooner or later the techniques would have to be perfected and be used on live specimens with survival and recovery being prime factors of concern.

One of the more difficult parts was to have the fish live through the anesthesia with good survival rates. Following these successes they could then work out the actual surgery issues. It has taken a while but today fish surgeries are highly successful.

Since this is a very specialized field within veterinary medicine, vets providing this service are not present in many areas and the procedures and optimum shipping can be costly.

While the cost of the fish may be part of the decision regarding whether the surgery might be an option, a more important factor at times is the sentimental value of the fish and the condition that should be corrected. Since some people are as attached to their fish as they might be to a dog, cat or other animal, they are inclined to help them survive with whatever means are possible and available.

The most common surgeries are performed to repair damage or infections to and around the mouth, removal of tumors, repairing and suturing wounds and exploration of abdominal problems. The surgery can make a big difference in the quality of life for the fish and at times can mean the difference between survival or death. (There is a growing list of fish veterinarians that can be reviewed by going to: www.fishdoc.net then check under the "Find a Vet" heading.)

In preparation for surgery, the fish is kept in a tank of well aerated, room

temperature water. The anesthetic is mixed well and then fed into the tank with the fish. When the fish falls asleep, it is removed from the tank and laid on a special surgical table. The fish is out of water but is maintained in water balance by a special pump that circulates fresh and anesthesia water over the gills for the duration of the surgery.

The preferred anesthesia is oil of cloves because it brings the fish down and back again rather slowly. This allows for more careful monitoring and leads to fewer accidents because the fish is moving slowly between the anesthetic planes.

The fish is returned to clean clear water for recovery after the surgery. The recovery or wake up, especially if oil of cloves was used, may take about 10 minutes. The time is also dependent on the strength of the fish, the temperature of the fish (colder takes longer) and the length of time of the procedure (longer time out requires more time to wake up).

Since the protective coating and skin of the fish have been breached by the surgery, infections are common.

The "wound" cannot be bandaged and the water is not a sterile media. This makes antibiotic therapy via injections a very important part of the post operative procedure and recovery. Most fish are cleared to go home the same day after minor surgeries. The owner may be required to continue some form of antibiotic therapy at home and to do whatever is necessary to get the patient eating again as soon as possible.

If stitches are required in the fish, they are gradually removed over a 14 day period. This is important because the stitches are very irritating to the skin and may prompt the fish to react to the irritation. Therefore, the faster that you can get them out but still keep the wound closed up, the better the fish will do.

While fish surgery has come a long way, it is still a very complicated

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procedure and requires equally specialized equipment. The timing and anesthesia strength are also critical and improper use can kill the fish. At the present time, it is definitely something that should not be attempted at home or by the average fish owner.

If you have a fish that might be helped by surgery but you can't find help locally, some veterinarians will allow you to ship your fish to them for the necessary surgical procedures. They will usually provide the necessary instructions on how to prepare them for shipping and the appropriate timelines. A few of the suggested guidelines are:

- Verify that the vet and surgery are properly scheduled
- Use a large plastic bag with about 30% water or enough to cover the fish and 70% pure (100%) oxygen.
- The bag should not be taut but should be "mushy" to allow for the expansion that will occur with the change in air pressure in the plane cabin.
- The fish should be double bagged and each bag closed with two rubber bands.
- Verify the appropriate shipping type, time of day to drop off the fish, pick up or delivery times at the final destination and how to communicate with the shipping company to get what you want and what the fish will need to arrive safely and in good condition.

Koi keeping and Hand Washing are two things that should always go together especially if you are directly handling the fish and other materials in the pond. This was highlighted in an article with that title by Rich Street in KOIUSA. While it may be true that some of the things infecting and affecting our fish may not be threats in themselves, the potential for human illnesses can come from

the pond water, fish parasites or other diseases.

Our pond water should not normally be a problem. However, if the pond may receive run-off from treated surrounding areas, is a potential drinking source for local or wild animals or if water of unknown quality is brought in with plants from the wild or other contaminated areas some problems may arise.

Giardia lamblia can be such a problem and it makes its home in the small intestine of mammals (not fish). The symptoms of mammalian infection can range from none in very light infections to severe chronic diarrhea in heavy infections. It is best to avoid ingestion of any pond water.

Other than roundworms and tapeworms most of the fish parasites do not bother humans. These worms too are usually only transmitted by ingestion. Therefore, don't eat your koi. When handling your fish if you aren't wearing gloves, wash your hands frequently.

Some of the other problems are related to bacterial infections usually belonging to the Mycobacterium genus. This type of bacteria can cause tuberculosis in humans. Some infected fish may exhibit some external symptoms such as anorexia, pop-eye skin discoloration, ulcers, nodules and fin rot. Not all fish that exhibit any of these symptoms may be infected but if they are present in any fish it is best to err on the side of caution and thoroughly wash your hands and all contact areas as soon and as often as practical. This is of special concern in colder water and if you have cuts or abrasions when handling infected fish. Open cuts and abrasions may also present the possibility of blood poisoning if thorough cleaning and treatment of the wounds is not followed after contact with contaminated materials or even from the pond treatment chemicals

Aeromonas and pseudomonas are other types of bacteria that may also be present and can infect humans. You can avoid these by wearing gloves and /or by washing your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap before and after handling the fish. (Before is to protect the fish and the after is to protect the handler.)

While this may sound scary, it should not deter you from touching your fish or working on the pond. There is possibly more potential for disease from touching pet dogs and cats after their romps outdoors and their wastes. Cleanliness in all cases is your best tool.

Special caution is necessary for people with weakened immune system from HIV, chemotherapy, organ transplant or steroid use.



*Hope you all had a
Happy Thanksgiving .
Wishing you a Great
Holiday Season!*

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Board Members 2005

President: Larry Hursh
Vice President: Bob Wheeler
Secretary: Kathy Hursh
Treasurer: John Roguski
Pond Tour Chairperson: Brain Nagel
Refreshments: Yvonne Wheeler and Kathy Hursh
Newsletter Editors: Hursh, James, and Nau families

We meet in a very friendly atmosphere at 7:00 pm, the first

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.

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. 473-6276 or e-mail lkhursh@aol.com or visit the club website at

www.ggw.org/gvpakc

Calendar of Events

December 9, 2005: Pot Luck Christmas Party and Pond Jeopardy Game. We are looking forward to celebrating the end of a successful year and the start of our tenth anniversary year.

December 9, 2005: NFKPC Christmas Party

January 6, 2006: There will be no GVPAKC meeting this month. The board will be meeting to discuss topics, events and ideas for the 2006 year. Please contact any of the board members by January 9th with your suggestions so that they can be reviewed and discussed at the planning meeting

February 3, 2006: This will be the start-up meeting for our tenth year. We welcome your suggestions for programs to make this a memorable year.

Please remember our commitment as a group to help support NFKPC at the AKCA Seminar in Buffalo, June 22-25, 2006

This is a first for our area and is a great opportunity to see great Koi and to learn more about them from the experts.

Plan your schedules now, so that we can not only staff the booksales area but attend some of the programs too.

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