



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

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Bright Spots in the Pond



The **Sarasa Comet** (left) and **Shubunkin** (right) are both single-tailed goldfish that were originally from Asia, and over the years, have been distributed worldwide. Their lack of barbels on the mouth, helps distinguish them from wild carp and koi. A pond of at least 180 gallons, with a gravel substrate, rocks, and hearty plants makes an ideal home for both varieties. Their size and habits make them desirable pond fish. They are medium sized, but will grow in proportion to their surroundings. They do not uproot plants. And both are winter hardy. They do, however, spawn readily and can over populate a pond.



The **Sarasa Comet** is an 8 – 12” red and white fish, often seen with red spots or patches on a white body. The reds on a Sarasa Comet tend to be truer than the orange-red of the Pond Comet. Their peaceful nature makes them a natural choice for many ponders, and a good substitute for larger koi, which uproot and feed on pond plants.

The **Shubunkin** is a fish of Japanese origin, distinguished by its calico coloring (red, white, blue, and black) and its nacreous scales (a mix of transparent and metallic). Shubunkins are also available in sky blue and midnight varieties. The name "Shubunkin" means "Autumn Brocade." This is a fitting name, for the fish's brocade patterns of glorious colors are like autumn foliage, and even more varied.



The **Golden Orfe** (*Leuciscus idus*) may be an interesting alternative to goldfish for larger ponds. These long, slender, torpedo-shaped fish are sociable and should be kept in schools of at least three. They are surface feeders and spend most of their time near the surface of the pond, where they grab insects and larvae. Their speed makes them entertaining to watch, but they are active and will jump out of very small ponds. While they can reach 2.5 feet in length in lakes and slow moving rivers, 1.5 feet is a more reasonable expectation for a pond. Derived from the European Ide, a silver predator, the Golden Orfe were bred for their carrot color and may sport black or dark brown speckles along their heads and backs. They are winter hardy, and if given enough space, will spawn in the spring.

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

I hope that everyone enjoyed Marlene's presentation. We should all feel more comfortable following this presentation to better observe and treat our fish. The unfortunate part of the KHA program for us in New York State is the limitations that are placed on the opportunities of the advisors to practice and share their training and knowledge with people experiencing problems with their fish. They cannot treat others fish, but can refer people to qualified fish vets. If local veterinarians are not qualified, there are fish veterinarians who have agreed to work with the local vets either by phone or internet to assist them in identifying the problem and recommending a plan of action or treatment.

While Marlene admits that she is disappointed that she cannot utilize her training, she is very pleased with herself for completing the program. The personal satisfaction and the ability to better understand their pond and fish made it a worthwhile experience.

For those members who were unable to attend the meeting, Marlene's handout listed the AKCA website and some of the reference points on that site. Now that we are aware of this source material, we can take advantage of this information to at least start to identify the problems or diseases or parasites that may be affecting our fish.

The suggested path to access this information is as follows:

Go to <http://www.akca.org> scroll to Main Sections on this Site

double click on Koi Health Advisor

From this area you can select from sub-menus on Pond Construction, Basic Water Quality, Filtration, Koi Anatomy, Koi Physiology, Koi Nutrition or Koi Health. There are other areas and sub-menus that offer additional Koi information especially in the AKCA library section.

This month our meeting will feature a presentation by Steve Poppen from Sunrise Aquatics on Pond cleaning from the point of view of the pond service professional. We will have the opportunity to compare these points with the normal steps that we as pond owners may use to achieve similar results. It should provide some interesting discussions since there are many variations on what works best between various pond owners and representatives and manufacturers within the industry. It should be good learning experience for us again to gain additional insight into alternate and workable approaches to pond cleaning.

Some of the interesting events for May that I have additional information to share are mostly related to plants and gardening. However, if you are interested in more specific pond and water gardening information, I suggest that you check the gardening information in the newspaper. Many of the garden centers and nurseries offer classes on various aspects of water gardening. The Lilac Festival will be May 13-22. The past couple of years the market and craft areas have offered plants and creations that could be used or incorporated around the pond or water garden.

May 21 is the Spring Pilgrimage by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society (BSPS) from 9:00am-1:00pm. This tour of the swamp is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required and participants are to meet at the Gillam Grant Community Center on West Bergen Rd. Their suggestions--dress appropriately for temperature etc., boots, hiking shoes or comfortable sneakers, insect repellent is good since it may be black fly and mosquito season, bring drinking water and a walking stick may be helpful on the more difficult sections for people with walking limitations. The tour may take up to 2-2 1/2 hours. The tour will be held unless the weather is really severe. Hots, chips and soda will be available for purchase between 11:00 - 1:00 with the proceeds going to BSPS.

This is also the date for the Genesee Land Trust Native Plant Sale. The sale is at the Brighton Town Hall on Elmwood Avenue from 8:30 am - 2:30 pm. They have had some native bog or bog adaptable plants in the past. We can also check with Steve Poppen at our meeting because they have been there with bog and water garden plants. He can update us with information on the NAWGS "National Parade of Ponds" on July 9-10. May 28 is the date for the RCGC Proud Market plant sale. The sale starts at 8:00 am and continues until the plants run out (usually around noon). There is usually a wide variety of plants form garden club members, serious hobbyists and small independent plant specialists. Selections include a little bit of everything from annuals, perennials and shrubs to vegetables.

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The weather is changing and it is time to open our pond season. It appears from my pond, at least, that our plants and critters have survived the winter well and possibly better than us. I hope the same is true in your case too.

You are encouraged to take advantage of these warm spells to fertilize your lilies, lotus and other heavy feeders to help them to recover from their dormant period. The healthier they are, the better they can survive the rigors of spring and possible disease and insect attacks.

We will have an area at LilyFest to answer questions about the club, our gardening and fish keeping activities and hopefully to recruit new members. I would appreciate it if any of the members would again loan us some nice specimen plants to decorate our area. This would highlight the ultimate joy and beauty of our hobby.

I would like to suggest too, that as you are dividing your plants, that you consider donating a portion of them to our plant auction at LilyFest on June 5th. following our 1:00 pm meeting that day. The auction is our main fund raising activity to provide the financial support for our guest speakers, affiliations with national organizations and for obtaining educational materials for the club. Please remember that we **will not** be meeting on Friday, June 3rd. We look forward to seeing you at this meeting and we hope that you will continue your support through the auction and by encouraging others to join in the fun and friendly exchange of information. I am looking for volunteers to help staff our display area on Saturday,

June 4th. I will not be available that day and really need your help. Please see me at the meeting or call me if you are willing to help.

If you are planning on buying additional water hyacinth plants this year, Larry Nau is initiating a sales incentive (The Hyacinth Project) to help support the Chapin Living Waters Foundation. Basically, \$1.50 of every \$3.00 of water hyacinth purchased from him will go to this Foundation. I have enclosed a copy of his plan with this mailing so that you can understand his connection and interest in this group.

A cautionary note: If you think that your fish might have a parasite problem, check them for any open sores or ulcers that could be a possible side effect of this infestation. If they have open sores, your treatment choices are a little more limited. **Do not** use any parasite control treatments that include formaldehyde or formalin as the base ingredient. Always be very, very careful when treating your fish with any medications. Never treat them and leave no matter how common or mild they may seem. Always stay nearby and monitor the pond or treatment area frequently in case an emergency should occur from the treatment. If you should have to treat your present fish or quarantine some new ones, here are a few reminders and perhaps some new suggestions to make life easier for both the fish and their caregivers:

- * The holding tank should be as large as possible, smooth sided, round or have well radiused corners.

- *It should be covered by netting or breathable fabric to prevent them

from jumping out. It can also minimize incursions by other critters.

- *There should be vigorous aeration and/or filtration, both of which are important especially with some of the chemical treatments.

- *All of the equipment should be sterilized before it is used.(A chlorine bleach mixed at 1oz per quart of water has been suggested by some authors. This should be followed by a clear water rinse and sun or air drying)

- *Net and move your more favored fish first to minimize their stress from the increasing chase activities as you progress down to your lesser ones.

- *Do not transport or carry the fish any distance in the net. It is better to transfer them to a small bucket or tub that can carry them to the treatment tank.

- *Monitor the water in the holding tank. If it starts to become cloudy or develops an off smell, you may be having a over-stocking problem. This could result in additional problems with potential gill diseases at a later time.

Under these conditions a gentle, but substantial water change with dechlorinated and temperature adjusted water is mandatory.

As an added note, if you must treat the entire pond with medications or chemicals, aeration and circulation are extremely important. If you have a back-up pump, it is strongly recommended that you start it and keep it operational during the treatment. Also verify whether the filter should or should not be operational during treatment.

Spring is also a good time to seek out new fish for the pond. Your quarantine tank or pond should be warm enough to minimize stress from any temperature changes be-

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tween the two locations. (Ideally, there should be less than a 5 degree difference.)

The question now becomes “What should I be looking for in getting my new or next koi?”

It is best to start with the concept that no fish is really perfect but there are features that can or will make them better or more interesting. The fish that you like best may not be a future champion, but with the help and understanding of a few guidelines, the one you pick may have better potential of developing into one that you will be proud of and enjoy even more.

In *Flowers & Fins*, the news letter of the Springfield Watergarden Society, Linda Siler presented some of the following information as rules for selecting koi. Confirmation of body shape and size to age comparisons should account for about 50% in making your decision. Patterning should be considered at about 30%. Finally, color should be worth about 20% in the decision process. This seemed rather unusual since many new comers to the hobby are more strongly attracted by the color and patterning. The difference between these points of view are what make the point of view very interesting. Koi should and almost always are viewed from the top. This means that the pelvic, anal and dorsal fins are not too noticeable and as such are of lesser concern. The pectoral fins, however, are quite noticeable and a balanced, large, well formed and rounded fin shape is more desirable.

Confirmation: The head and body already appearing or at least size should be in proportion to each other. The head should not appear to be overly large (a condition that

could indicate stunted growing conditions at an early age). The spine and its alignment from head to tail should be straight. Baby koi may have torn fins but can outgrow this problem if given ample growing room in your pond. Larger and especially older koi will have a more difficult and longer time requirement to outgrow bad fins.

Pattern: The pattern should be well balanced from head to tail as seen from above. It should appear to be deep into the skin. They should be crisp and vivid and should not appear to have smudges or smears. Baby koi are the exception to this since they are still setting their patterns and most smudges are acceptable at this stage. A good pattern will also highlight and emphasize good color.

Color: Just like in the pattern, the color should appear to be deep within the pattern and skin of the koi. It should be crisp and vivid. The most overlooked or misunderstood color by novices is white and that is very unfortunate. The best white should be as white as new snow. It should not be off-white or creamy-white. In solid color koi, it should have the same color hue from head to tail and no same color blotches.

I hope that these guidelines will help you to select a good quality koi. The final decision is up to you. Remember, there are no perfect koi. It's your fish so select the color(s) and pattern(s) that you like, but get the best one that you can. Good luck and enjoy your new pets.

Mosquitoes have already been observed in the area and it is probably due to the wet weather earlier this month. Your pond is not the source of them, but you should still protect

yourself from their bites. The threat of West Nile Virus still exists, but the chance of a human being infected by a mosquito bite is still quite low.

According to the Centers For Disease Control (CDC) using a mosquito repellent that contains DEET will help to keep them and the virus away from you. The following list from CDC may help you to choose the proper DEET formula not only for use around your home but also for those who are planning on the tour of Bergen Swamp or other wetland or woodsy areas.

* A product containing 23.8% DEET provides an average of 5 hours of protection from mosquito bites.

* A product at 20% DEET provides almost 4 hours of protection.

* A product with 6.5% DEET is good for almost 2 hours.

* A product with 4.75% DEET and 2% soybean oil were both able to provide approximately 90 minutes of protection.

Based on these facts and the time periods that you might be exposed, you can pick to appropriate product and reapplication sequence to help you avoid problems and itches.

Time is moving quickly and the pond tour will be here before you know it. Please consider hosting a stop on the tour or recommending someone else. It could be a club member or perhaps a friend or neighbor's pond.



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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

- 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.

Purpose of the Club

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

www.ggw.org/gvpakc

Calendar of Events

- **May 6, 2005:** Presentation on pond cleaning
 - **May 13, 2005:** NFKPC meeting
 - **May 13-22, 2005:** Rochester Lilac Festival
 - **May 21, 2005:** Genesee Land Trust Native Plant Sale
 - **May 28, 2005:** RCGC Proud Market Plant Sale

 - **June 3-5, 2005:** LilyFest and Plant Auction
 - **June 5, 2005:** GVPAKC monthly meeting will be at 1:00 pm at LilyFest prior to the plant auction.
 - **June 10, 2005:** NFKPC meeting
 - **June 23-26, 2005:** AKCA seminar in Tulsa, OK.

 - **July 9-10, 2005:** NAWGS "Parade Of Ponds"
 - **July 16, 2005:** RCGC Garden Tour
 - **July 23, 2005:** NFKPC Pond Tour
 - **July 21-26, 2005:** IWGS Symposia in Bethlehem, PA
 - **July 30, 2005:** Tentative date GVPAKC Pond Tour
- Some events to consider in the long range planning.
- **August 12-14, 2005:** Koi America in Chantilly, VA
- "Naturally Green" - A live gardening show every Saturday from **9-10 am** on WYSL 1040 AM.