



Lone Star Koi Club

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Koi Chatter



The April 2013 publication of the Lone Star Koi Club – Houston Texas

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK LSKC

Hello LSKC a-fish-a-nados!

Thanks to all for making the March meeting a great success. I think our discussions are making us all better koi keepers. Let's keep it up.

The Garden Party at Nelson's Watergardens on April 13, was great fun and we met some really wonderful people. Hopefully, some will become new LSKC members. It goes without saying, thank you, to all the folks who volunteered to man our station. Fun was had by all.

Hope to see everyone this Sunday (21st) at Robert and Denise Wall's house. Bring your information on what you feed your koi, and bring a side dish for the buffet. We have to eat too.

See you soon,

Melanie Nau

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEXT MEETING
April 21, 2013
3rd Sunday 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Home of Robert and Denise Wall
6307 North Main St.
Houston, Texas

Robert and Denise are planning to serve brisket, smoked sausage, potato casserole, wine, beer and soft drinks. Bring a side dish to compliment. There is a large lot one house north of the Wall's house that is fine for all to park. Most likely there will not be enough room on the drive and you **cannot park on N Main. St.**

DIRECTIONS TO THE MEETING

DRIVING DIRECTIONS FROM DOWNTOWN HOUSTON

1. Take I-45 North toward Dallas US-290 West toward Austin.
2. Exit Cavalcade and turn left (west).
3. Follow Cavalcade across Airline to North Main St.
4. Turn right on North Main (north). This intersection is also shared with Studewood St. so be careful to take North Main and not Studewood.
5. House will be a few blocks down between 23rd and 24th.

Address:
6307 North Main St.

Lone Star Koi Club Directory

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2013 MEETING SCHEDULE

Month	Date	Host	Speaker/Topic
January	20th	Bush	January 1st
February	17 th	Sartorius	Gadgets and tools used to manage your pond.
March	17 th	Nau/Green	Pond transition from Winter to Spring.
April	21 st	Wall	Feeding your koi.
May	4 th & 5 th	Pond Tour	POND TOUR – NO MEETING
June	16 th	Bush	To be announced.
July	21 st	Joiner	To be announced.
August	18 th	Cook	To be announced.
September	15 th	?	Nomination of Officers.
October	20 th	?	To be announced.
November			Combined with early December meeting.
December	14 th	Bush	Christmas Party & Auction

Please stop by the Welcome Table at each meeting, check in and pick up a nametag if you don't have one so new members can get to know you.

LKSC Membership News

If you have anyone contact you about koi needing homes or homes needing koi, please contact Randy Martin, xtremeflyr@yahoo.com or Paul Moss, paulbkm@gmail.com.

Thanks to our rescue partners.

Invitations & News from Other Koi and Pond Clubs, Associations or Societies

Articles

Koi Nutrition

By: Ben Helm B.Sc. – Nishikoi Information Centre

Koi and all other fish are just like us in that they have particular dietary requirements. Naturally, koi will scavenge and root around a pond bottom as an aquatic pig eating worms, algae and debris, but where they are stocked in an artificial garden pond their diet and overall health is reliant on what they are fed artificially.

As a close relative of the carp (they even share the same name *Cyprinus carpio*) the nutritional requirements are almost identical to that of carp and similar to ourselves in that they are omnivores, eating both plant and animal material. In fact, there is very little difference between the dietary requirements of koi and other pond fish such as goldfish, comets and shubunkins. Manufactured koi diets tend to be a little more refined than pond fish diets with a greater emphasis on protein content and color enhancement. Artificial koi diets can contain a wide range of raw materials in their formulation as long as they provide an overall balanced diet. Just think of the vast range of foods we can eat and still remain healthy. However, the blend of raw materials in a koi diet must satisfy specific criteria to provide sufficient of the following:

- **Protein.** Levels of approximately 30% are typical but will be higher if a growth food and lower than this if a low temperature food. Protein is present for growth and repair and is the diet's most costly ingredient. Sources of protein include both animal and plant derivatives and meals such as fishmeal, soya, wheat and egg.
- **Carbohydrate.** These are the complex sugars such as starch and cellulose. They are all plant in origin and are included in high quantities in koi diets as a cheap source of energy. They are also included as a source of fibre to aid digestion.
- **Oils.** Oils are included as fish or vegetable oils. Usually less than 10% in the diet they are used by koi in the production of new tissues etc. If too much oil is included then pellets appear greasy and oily as in a trout pellet. These tend to be too rich for koi and can cause water quality problems.
- **Vitamins and Minerals.** Manufactured diets often rely on the natural vitamin and mineral content included in the raw ingredients. More recently better quality brands have been including stable supplements of the notoriously unstable Vitamin C.

All reputable koi foods will satisfy the above, providing adequate balanced nutrition for your koi and pondfish however there is no industry standard that koi food must meet before it can be sold. Carry out some detective work yourself before buying. Look at shop displays to spot which are the popular foods and ask friends and aquatic retailers which food they use or would recommend. When choosing a food it is also wise to keep an eye out for the following. These may often set brands apart and may be reflected in the price.

1. Value for money. Check and compare weights. This may sound obvious but rival brands may produce pellets that are more 'blown' with air than others. This may give the impression of getting a larger pack for your money when in fact you may be paying for air!

2. Look on the ingredient list for a wide range of ingredients and for beneficial additives such as:

Color enhancers. Raw ingredients such as spirulina, krill, chrysanthemum meal and other synthetic compounds such as astaxanthin and canthaxanthin are included to enhance the skin coloration in fish. A food containing these will improve your fish's color but will also increase the price of the food.

Stabilized Vitamin C. Most of the natural Vitamin C is lost in the milling process. Stabilized Vitamin C is added to provide a boost of such an essential Vitamin ensuring your koi are kept in tip-top condition.

3. Packaging. Is the packaging robust and re-sealable enabling you to keep the food fresh for a reasonable period? If food is left open to the air then its quality will rapidly deteriorate.

4. Best before date. Make sure that you are buying this year's stock and that the 'Best Before' date will last until the end of the season. Vitamin content should be present up to 12 months after manufacture. The less time there is on the best before date the less fresh the food is.

You may find it useful to ask your koi dealer what they feed their fish. They will be very well informed as to what they want from a food and will only offer their own koi what they consider to be the best for them. Be careful not to be too influenced by price as there are unbalanced 'budget' diets on the market. In the same way there are over-priced diets which are not significantly better than mid-priced well balanced diets. Now that you know what to look for when choosing a suitable koi diet, best of luck!

KOI NUTRITION

By Don Harrawood

There are many good (and bad) koi feeds available to the Koi Keeper. In general, a good koi food for growth will contain from 32 to 38 percent protein. Protein is the major energy source for koi. This protein should be derived primarily from fish meal, and fish meal should be the first ingredient listed in the contents label. Several less desirable fish foods list plant or animal protein sources as the major ingredient.

Koi food should be sealed and stored in a cool, dark, dry place in order to preserve freshness. Old food that is not cared for can become rancid. You should be able to tell if food is rancid by the smell. Fish that are fed a diet of rancid food often results in fatty liver and/or liver cancer. "If in doubt, throw it out." For maximum growth, koi should be fed at least 4 times per day in warm water temperatures. Koi have no stomach and digest their food in about 4 hours. Feed only what they will eat in a few minutes because excess food left in the pond will increase ammonia content of the water.

In the fall, reduce the amount fed as the temperature goes lower. Feed until water temperature reaches 50 degrees. When the water temperature approaches 50° F. stop feeding, since at that temperature a koi's digestive system is shut down. Normally they will not eat at this temperature, but if they do, it is unhealthy for them, since the food will not digest and will just decay in their intestines.

In the Spring, start feeding sparingly when water temperature has been above 50 degrees for a few days. When water temperature reaches about 60 degrees, increase feeding to what they will eat in about 5 minutes. The amount of feed should be increased accordingly as water temperature rises. As you can see, it is important to be able to determine your pond water temperature, so if you don't have a pond thermometer,

you should get one. There are good digital thermometers with water probes on the market for around \$30. In koi ponds, feeding, water treatments, and medical treatments are all temperature related. For instance, antibiotic treatment of koi in water below 55 degrees has absolutely no effect, since the koi's blood circulation system is at a virtual standstill.

Below are some questions and answers related to Koi nutrition:

- **When Koi Pellets are made they float – how is this done at manufacturing level?** Answer: Manufacturers can make koi feed float or sink by juggling the pressure/moisture/heat ratio of the feed in the manufacturing process. If the specific gravity of the food is less than water, the food will float.
- **Some commercial koi foods have red and green pellets in the same packaging – what is the difference between these two different colored pellets?** Answer: Color is the only difference.
- **When feeding koi the floating pellets are swept away to the surface skimmer before all the koi collection can finish them – what can be done to avoid this during feeding time?** Answer: To avoid this, one may (1) Feed less food at one time in order for the fish to consume the food more quickly and possibly feed a lesser amount several times per day, (2) Turn off the skimmer during feeding, and (3) put the food inside a floating ring to prevent the food from going into the skimmer.
- **Which ingredient/ingredients commonly found in koi food can go rancid if the food is old?** Answer: Fats and oils.
- **How can you determine old food without a laboratory test?** Answer: Old food can be determined by manufacturing dates on the package. (Note: Not all manufacturers put dates on their packages.) Sometimes old food can be determined by smell (rancid) or by sight (webs, mold, etc.).
- **Which part of the food formula produces growth in koi?** Answer: Protein is the main ingredient for promoting growth in the koi. In the best foods, this protein is derived from fish meal or other fish products.
- **Why do koi not grow much in winter – if at all?** Answer: In winter the water is cold (below 50 degrees F.), koi metabolism is low and they do not eat. This inhibits their growth.
- **Are vitamins in koi food essential?** Answer: Yes. Without sufficient vitamins, protein will not function to its full potential.
- **Koi food can be dampened and fed to all size koi – but why is it bad to let the pellets float or stay in water for a long time before being eaten?** Answer: Uneaten food will dissolve and pollute the mechanical and biological filters, as well as increasing ammonia levels in the pond water.
- **Do koi grow to a large size only in a deep pond?** Answer: No, They have been known to grow to tremendous size in small, shallow areas.
- **At what age do koi stop growing?** Answer: Growth slows dramatically at about age 5 – 7 years. Many koi may continue growing to 10 to 12 years, but by a much slower rate. Maximum growth is achieved during the first three years of age.
- **Should koi food have a smell?** Answer: Koi food can have a good and a bad smell. The good smell is the scent of warm fish meal. This food is fresh and should be used. The bad smell is a

rancid smell due to the food being old or having been subjected to moisture and/or sunlight. This food is spoiled and should be discarded.

- **How should koi food be stored?** Answer: Koi food should be stored in small sealed containers in a cool, dry, dark area.
- **Why is freshly made food so important?** Answer: Freshly made food is important because it contains essential vitamins and minerals necessary for good koi nutrition. As food gets older, these vitamins and minerals lose much of their potency.
- **Why is feeding stopped at very low water temperatures?** Answer: Koi metabolism slows down drastically in cold water, and they eat very little. When they do eat, the food does not digest properly. Koi in cold water can go for months without food, and should not be fed until the water temperature rises consistently above 50 degrees F.
- **Is it better to feed koi several times a day or once a day - why?** Answer: In water temperatures above 60 degrees. it is better to feed koi several times a day because they have no stomach for storing food, but have a “straight gut”. They digest their food in about four hours and then will be ready for more. Frequent feeding promotes faster growth.

Lone Star Koi Club Advertising

Rates are posted below. If you are interested in placing an ad, please email the editor at texaskoiguy@comcast.net

Ad Size	Newsletter & Website (w/link) Combined	
	6 mo	Per Yr
Business Card	\$60	\$100
¼ page	\$80	\$150
½ page	\$100	\$185
Full Page	\$150	\$250
The Annual Pond Tour Booklet rate is \$200		

CLASSIFIED ADS

We welcome ads for Koi, equipment, and other items from members. Members are requested to keep the ad Koi related and please donate a portion, (10%), of your proceeds back to the club.

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2013 EVENT SCHEDULE



- Feb 14-17: Japan Nishikigoi Expo & Aloha Koi Show (HI)
- April: Kodama Koi Food Grow-Out Contest (NJ)
- May 4-5: Koi and Pond Party (Season-Opening Event) (NJ)
- July: Anniversary Event (NJ)
- August: Kodama Koi Academy (NJ)
- Oct 11-28: Niigata Tour
- Nov: Harvest Event (NJ)



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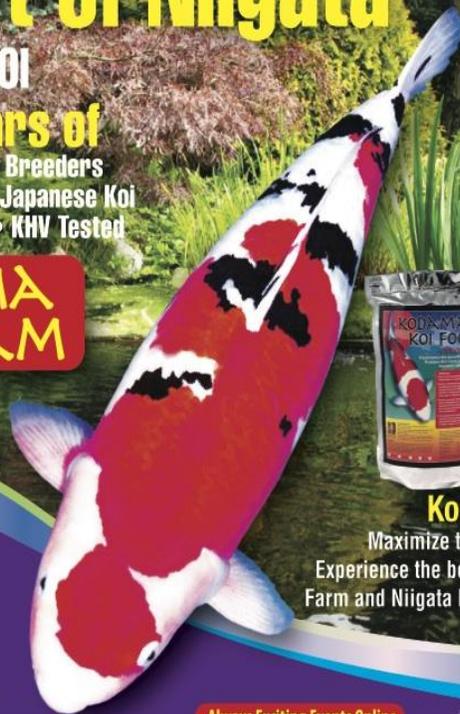
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From the Editor

Thanks to Melanie and Karen for opening their home for the March meeting. This was a good meeting with excellent attendance and even better food. The discussion on pond changes from winter to spring was perfect and it seems everyone had something to share. As most pond keepers know, this period of transition presents some of the toughest challenges we face. These types of conversations are where we learn.

For the April meeting we are going to discuss feeding your koi, what, when and how. Again, because we are coming out of the winter season and headed into the spring/summer season, it is important to follow certain guidelines. So, come and share with your fellow koi keepers. What food do you feed, where do you get it, how much does it cost. If possible, bring a label showing the ingredients. I have included two articles above about feeding your koi, so bring your questions.

Several of our members, myself included, attended the Kodama Koi Sale on April 6th, at the country home of Dr. Nam in Manvel, Texas. Lots of koi were purchased and hopefully they will be Future Grand Champions (FGC). Thanks to Taro for bringing his fish to Houston and making them available for purchase. Thanks also to Dr. Nam for providing the perfect location. Lastly, thanks to Felipe Osborne for handling the set up and tear down of the tanks. That is a big job.

See you this Sunday, April 21st at 2:00 p.m.

Donnie Bayer
(713) 542-3345



