



FINS & FRIENDS

The Official Newsletter of the North Carolina Koi & Watergarden Society

Upcoming Events

NCKWS Visit us at: www.nckws.com

August 16, Meeting
George Lambie & Amy Bonis, Raleigh, NC

September 20, Meeting
George & Pat Wallace, Raleigh, NC

September 27, Ikeage
Mud Pond Growout Harvest
Lakeview Dailily Farm, Garner, NC

October 10-12
Carolina Classic Young Koi Show, Cary, NC
www.carolinaclassickoishow.com

USA/WORLD

September 12-14, MAKC 20th Annual
Koi Show & 4th Annual Goldfish Show
Westminster, MD, www.makc.com

September 12-14
ZNA Potomac's Annual Koi Show
Vienna, VA, www.znapotomac.org

September 12-14
14th Annual Atlanta Koi Club Show
Tucker, GA, www.atlantakoiclub.org

September 27-28, Fall Harvest Sale
Lotus Land Koi Farm, Marshville, NC

President's Corner

Where has the year gone? It seems that only a few weeks ago we were ordering food, tosayi, and preparing for the year ahead. The hot days of summer are now in full force so keeping an eye on water temperatures is a must. Remember that water temperatures in the mid to upper 80s could stress your fish. Also, as the water temperatures increase, the oxygen levels in the pond will decrease so make sure you provide plenty of aeration. If you have any questions or problems, feel free to contact one the club's KHAs.

Speaking of KHAs, I would like to congratulate Ed Walker on completing the KHA course. Our club now has 5 KHAs!

Fall is just around the corner and this will be a busy time for our club. We will have our mud pond harvest at the end of September and our first koi show will be in October. THE CAROLINA CLASSIC YOUNG KOI SHOW, www.carolinaclassickoishow.com, will take place October 10 - 12. I encourage all members to participate in both events. We will have fun and learn a great deal.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our members for making this such a great club to be a part of. I have learned a lot over the last 4 years. I know if I have a question about plants or a problem with my pond or koi, there will be a member or two willing to help me. The discussion board on our website, www.nckws.com, is a great place to ask questions. Thanks again to everyone.

Rich,

Rich Eitel, NCKWS President

Issue Highlights

NCKWS Koi of the Year

AKCA Seminar

Member Spotlight

What is a Koi Show?

Bug Bites

Tips on showing Koi



Message from the Editor

No, it's not your imagination. You only just received the Q2 newsletter and here we are with the new one.

Getting this issue ready was quite the challenge and I worried that the accelerated deadline would result in a newsletter that's not up to our standards. I shouldn't have worried. Our dedicated members came through once again.

I even received an article from someone who may be a new member, but no one seems to know him. Nu Bee's article on attending a koi show is...well, let's just say it's interesting. Nu Bee, if you are reading this, thank you and I hope to see you at our next meeting!

Rossy.

Rossy Garcia, NCKWS Editor



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What is a Koi Show? By: Dan Phillips, KHA

Answer – A koi show is an art contest, a competition, a beauty pageant, a livestock exhibit, an educational experience and a social gathering of koi kichi.

I encourage those of you who want to learn and grow in the koi hobby to attend at least one show this year where; you may attend as a general observer/student of koi, you may volunteer your time helping the local club host the show or you may bring koi to enter into the show competition.

For the casual observer and koi student:

There are usually a number of good quality koi to see & study first hand at a koi show. To identify quality koi you need to see them, study them, again and again and again... The more you learn the more you know what traits to look for when selecting new koi for your own collection. You can develop an eye for what is a "good" asking price given the quality, age, sex and breeder of the koi you are considering purchasing. Attend seminars and wet labs to listen to judges explain how they make their decisions. As an added bonus for attending, you can get good deals on koi & pond supplies from vendors at the show.

Volunteer:

By working at a koi show you have the opportunity to learn how water quality is maintained for 100-200 koi in show tanks over a three day period. You can learn how to handle koi (bowling, benching, classifying, proper English style show techniques used to minimize cross contamination between owner's tanks, etc.) You can learn how judges make some of their decisions in addition to making new koi friends from around the country.

Show entry participant:

Learn how to prepare fish for a show weeks or months in advance by selecting which of your koi are at their best and are ready to take to a show. Learn safe procedures for netting & transporting koi to/from a show. Learn QT after a show and the fun of friendly competition, hopefully bringing home some MAJOR awards.

Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to spend thousands of dollars on a koi before you are ready to

show. There are many size categories available for completion starting with < 8" on up to JUMBOS. With the improvements some of our members have made to their collections in the last year, they have koi that could be taken to a show with the expectation that they will do well in their given categories. We have members who have taken very high end koi to shows and won Supreme Grand Champion. In addition, there have been much less expensive koi that have won Baby Grand Champion! Even some spawned koi have won MAJOR awards. There is room for all to participate!

What is a koi show? ...Fun!

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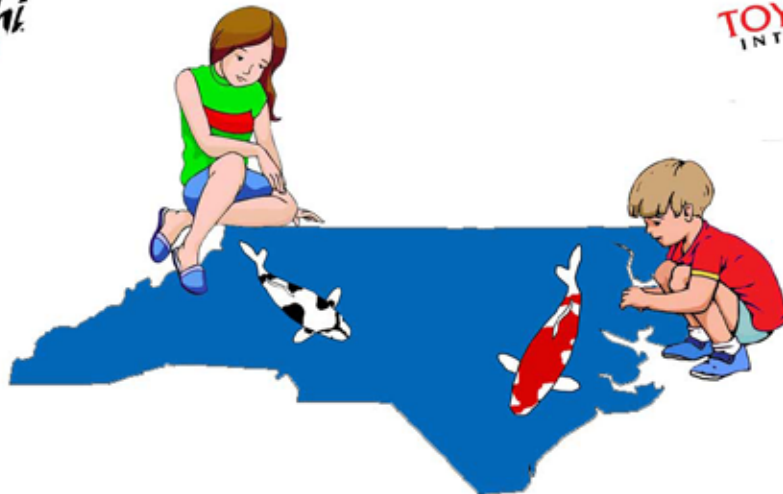
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North Carolina Koi & Watergarden Society

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www.nckws.com



Pondscaping with Groundcovers

By: Marilyn A. Grolitzer, Ph.D.

Choosing plants to place around the edges and sides of ponds to prevent erosion while providing decorative interest and easy access to the pond may be a challenge. There are a variety of very low and fast growing groundcovers, which tolerate a range of soil conditions. Some of these plants can be found in boggy areas as well as arid rock gardens. These groundcovers grow as nature's carpets forming very dense mats like turf but do not require mowing or fertilization. Many groundcovers are drought tolerant and flower for extended periods of time. These are some of my favorite plants as they require little care, no water once established, and some are rugged enough to tolerate light foot traffic.



One of the most commonly used carpet groundcovers is Ajuga reptans. Ajuga comes in many foliage colors, from green to reddish purple. The most common variety is 'Burgundy Glow'. It is evergreen and tolerates sun to shade and a range of soil conditions.

It produces 6 inch stalks of blue purple flowers in the spring. It spreads most rapidly in moist soil in areas of light to medium shade. Ajuga can be readily propagated by division in fall or spring.

A rugged but decorative groundcover is Lysimchia nummularia. It is also commonly known as Creeping Jenny or Moneywort plant. It is an evergreen perennial. Some of the varieties can be invasive as they spread rapidly. A very decorative variety is "Aurea" which is yellow and much slower growing. This groundcover is known for its moisture loving properties. It is planted next to one of our ponds and is creeping over the rocks and into the water. It is stunning and tolerates light foot traffic and also appears to be deer resistant.

Sedums are known to be some of the most drought tolerant groundcovers and are typically found in arid areas. There are about 500 varieties of sedum. The groundcover sedums are also commonly called stonecrop. I have 3-4 types of sedum groundcovers growing around the pond several of which produce a sea of beautiful flat star shaped yellow flowers in the spring. Most of the sedums have green succulent leaves, which vary in



texture, and size being moss like, needle like, thick toothed or coin shaped. Most have green leaves. Sedum 'Angelina' has yellow leaves when placed in a sunny location. Goldmoss sedum (Sedum acre) spreads rapidly and may become invasive but can be readily controlled. There are several varieties of S. kamtschaticum, which have large toothed leaves and vary in height and shade of yellow flower. Sedum are readily propagated by digging up clumps or planting broken pieces or leaves. The sedum groundcovers do not appear to be in the deer's diet in our neighborhood.



My new favorite plant is the decorative perennial commonly referred to as the ice plant. There are over 6 different genera, which were formerly grouped under the name Mesembryanthemum and are now classified under different names. They are green leaved

succulents producing proliferations of brightly colored daisy like flowers. They appear to thrive in poor dry soils and sun to part shade. I have clumps of Delosperma congestum 'Cooperi' dispersed throughout my gardens and next to other groundcovers. They bloom from spring until freeze conditions and provide extraordinary decorative interest and require no care once established. Propagation is easy by digging up a clump or just planting broken pieces. They are ideal for borders, rock gardens and other tough places and appear to be deer resistant. Ice plants are available in a range of colors and sizes.

Groundcover plantings are available which offer the neatness and uniformity of turf grass without the lawn maintenance. These low groundcover plants form very dense mats, spread rapidly, tolerate a wide range of soil conditions including poor dry soils, are readily propagated and not a favorite deer food. In addition, they are not prone to insects or disease and therefore do not require the use of chemicals. Lastly they do not need to be mowed. Why not give these beautiful low maintenance living carpets a try around your ponds.

NCKWS Membership Advantage

By: Jim Burchette

What have I gained from becoming a member of the North Carolina Koi and Water Garden Society? The list is long. How about koi husbandry, pond planning, plants of all kinds, mud pond grow-outs, microscope use for parasites, koi terminology ("the language"), DIY, education, what makes a good koi, member pond visits, how to seine a pond, good eats, "less koi, more filtration" give that one some thought... Helping people afflicted with koi kichi syndrome, and how to select and judge what makes a quality koi. Gosh, the list could go on and on, but the number one advantage to becoming a member of NCKWS is making new friends who share the same love of koi, water and life as you do.

Participate and Learn!



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Welcome to Cull Haven

By: Mike Slawson



We built our first pond when we lived in Virginia. We bought a prefab pond about four by seven feet and seventeen inches deep. I dug a hole lined it with sand, put the pond in, added a pump in the pond, created a waterfall, small biologic filter and we were set for fish.

Of course when it gets cold in Virginia the water can freeze - add a winter heater. The ground freezes when it gets cold and has a habit of heaving objects out of the ground - several opportunities to regret ever having created such a disaster.

Finally, a pump placed directly on the bottom of your pond has a tendency to get clogged on a regular basis; this required me to pull it out of the pond frequently to clean. Nevertheless, we went to our local nursery that sold Koi and bought three. They grew nicely spawned and luckily Elva and my daughter saw the little fry and we saved quite a few. When they got a little bigger we introduced them into the pond. We added a water lily and a bull frog set up residence. We loved it and never tired of looking at the fish.

Fortunately, I was able to retire in 2002. Unfortunately, I had no idea how to transport koi. As a result we left our pond and pals behind and moved to Hertford, North Carolina. We talked frequently about wanting a pond; however, I have an aversion to snakes, raccoons, and other varmints that are attracted to such pleasant feeding grounds - especially since we lived in a swamp. The swamp finally got the best of us anyway, and we moved to Cary.

As soon as we moved to Cary, we decided that we were

going to have a really big pond this time. We contracted with a local landscaping company to build it for us. I had no intention of digging a large hole in the ground and wasn't yet acquainted with the vast wealth of experience and help from the NCKWS. While the pond seemed good size to us, in the grand scheme of things, it isn't that big. It holds about 1,800 gallons of water, and measures 10 by 14 feet and is 30 inches deep. The pond bottom is black liner, which seems to be fairly common among ponds of this size. We have a tetra P2 filter, a skimmer, and two pumps. One of the pumps (350gph) is for the filter and the other (500gph) pumps water to our water feature a large urn in the middle of the pond.



As you can see, the pond is informal with plants around the sides, and also two water lilies. We like to have both fish and plants which make it look more natural. We added some water hyacinth and some lettuce, which multiplied faster than mice and have an irritating tendency to clog the skimmer.

Exit the water plants except for a few kept under strict quarantine. We managed to attract another bull frog, which has taken up residence in the skimmer. He and I battle over who really owns that skimmer.

Finally the fish. When we joined the society, we thought we were going to have a koi pond but low and behold it was a cull pond. Who knew? We bought one fish from the landscaping company, which was a butterfly about three inches. We put it in the pond and it immediately disappeared until spring.

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As a result my grandkids thought we needed a couple more and added two more three inch fish from the same source, not butterfly this time. My realtor thought we were short so she gave us two more fish from Pet Smart - they promptly died and were replaced by two more of Pet Smart's finest.



ley extract, and using my pond vacuum periodically.

We should have taken more care deciding what fish to procure because we can't see throwing the super culls over the fence. We will add one from the mud pond. I still think we have room for a couple more; it will be an eclectic mix.

We love watching our fish and they have really grown in the past few months. Each has his/her own name and we eagerly come out each morning and eat our breakfast as they eat theirs. In the evening, during cocktail hour we spend our time relaxing and enjoying the pond. It's not for the faint of heart but the rewards are great.

Finally the society had a cull sale at Garden Supply and I bought two of their culls - one is almost an asagi and the other an ogon. Thus Cull Haven.

To decide what to do in the pond business, I had purchased a book back in Virginia. Once here, I augmented that with numerous web searches. One of those was the North Carolina Koi and Water Garden Society. I read the newsletter and the discussion topics but decided to pass for the time being - my mistake. However, at the cull sale there was the society in all its glory. We decided to join since everyone seemed so knowledgeable and friendly. We have come to several meetings since and it has been a bit humbling - filtration, pumps, plants to get and not to get, kinds of food and how much to feed, water changes (never heard of them). More importantly, as our education continues, we have been given an opportunity to meet great new friends.

I have learned a lot after the fact since putting in the pond. Bigger filter and bigger pumps would have been a great help. While the water plants do help get the water clear you better keep them contained or your daily chores increase as they do. The algae is a pain to contain but can be managed by keeping the pump going 24/7, the skimmer cleaned daily, throwing in a little bar-

An advertisement for taproot land management co. The top part features a logo with a stylized tree and the text 'taproot land management co.' To the right of the logo is a list of services: landscaping, irrigation installation, property maintenance, and hardscapes installation. Below the logo is a photograph of a garden with a stone border, rocks, and various plants. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is contact information: office 919.562.4882, fax 919.562.4883, and www.taprootnc.com.

Spawning, Culling, Raising a Grand Champion, part one

By: Dan Phillips, KHA

Here are the parents (oyagoi) I used in this planned spawning on May 31, 2008.



Female doitsu showa, breeder is Aoki



Male doitsu showa X beni kumonryu, breeder is Quality Koi

2nd male – a beni kumonryu (not pictured)

The art and science of culling fry - well, it's not really very scientific, it's just a keep the "good" ones and cull the rest type of exercise. The goal is to keep only the "best". The rules of thumb for culling have been determined thru many generations of koi and experimentation, which fry to keep depends on the variety. For showa, the first culling, which occurs at only 2-3 weeks of age, is to keep the dark/black ones and cull the rest. As they get older, patterns and colors will begin to appear. The light, off-white colored ones quickly become tateshita (i.e. koi of no value to the koi hobbyist/breeder.)

A koi spawn may result in 100,000 to 300,000 fertilized eggs – such a large number because in nature so few survive to adulthood due to predators, disease, etc. In our man made ponds, there is limited space, thus culling is a MUST! Since koi do not breed true, percentage depends upon the variety, when the culling is completed you will be very lucky to end up with one hundred tosai worth keeping. Out of one hundred to-

sai, you may end up with ten worthy nisai to grow over the second season. Of those ten, two may become show quality koi at age three or older. Looking at these odds helps us understand why a high end show quality koi demands the price it does from a breeder.

My first culling was done at three weeks. Before and after pictures are below. Size at this age ranges from 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch.



Before



After

At about five-six weeks, I began to see some of the dark ones develop patterns. Time for a second cull. Light colored ones and Tobys (Japanese term for the large ones) were culled. Size at this age ranges from 1/2 inch to 2 inches. Extremes in size variation is quite evident. In general, the Tobys are up to 10X bigger than the smallest ones (in weight). Unfortunately, these tend not to be keepers as they're usually light orange to white in color.

At eight weeks, there were a few Tobys, which still needed to be culled. These were range of 4 to 5 inches. Many were still only 2 inches in size.



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As a comparison, take a look at these tosai bred at Purdin Koi Farm just this Spring.



Sanke and showa are in the 5-7 inches range! As you can see, Bill & Maureen McGurk of PKF have great brood stock to begin with, good mud ponds at their disposal, a long and warm growing season in Louisiana and great culling skills developed over many years.



Some of their kohaku are already in the 8-10 inches range



There will be a follow up article next Spring to see if what remains of this spawn will be grown out as nisai.



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Nu Bee Goes to a Koi Show

By: Nu Bee

I kept hearin' 'bout this thang called a koi show. What in the world was koi? So I decided to mozy on down an see what all the fuss was about. When I got der, I saw this big ol' tent and figured it must be a circus! Der were all thez blue hot tubs all over the place on the outside. Figured dey must have been for all dem circus folks to soak in after the show.

I got out my truck and strolled on over to take a look at dem hot tubs, and you wouldn't believe what I saw. Der waz fish in 'em. Not any kinda fish I ever seen, dey waz all sorts of colors. Some of 'em even had really long fins like dem thar goldfishes. I saw dis fella that looked important lookin' in one of dem tubs, so I asked him why dem fish waz in the hot tubs. He said dey were being judged. "Judged, like at the fair" I asked? "Yep", he said, "they are getting awards." Get outta here. Only awards I ever heard of waz for catching the biggest bass. So I asked ifin I could fetch my fishin' pole out the truck. He said that ifin I did, he would introduce me to some fellas named Smith and Wesson. From the look on his face, I don't thank I waz wantin' to meet dem fellas.

As he moved from tub to tub, I had to ask, "Do dey taste like", and he said "Chicken" before I could finish my question. He didn't seem amused, and asked me "How does old Blue taste?" "Ol' Blue is my prized huntin' dog, I would never eat him" I said. "Well, we don't eat these either." Seems like a waste of sum good fish to me. You don't catch 'em and you can't eat 'em. I think one would look right purty above my fireplace.

I followed that fella 'round fer about an hour or so as he kept lookin' at all dem fish. When he was done, everyone started clappin. Must been sumthin' happen' in the circus tent, so I went in der to see. Der were some more hot tubs in der with fish too, but thez waz for sale. Folks were payin' lots of money for dem fish. I tried tellin' dem that I could go catch a mess load of fish for less money than what dey waz payin, but dey didn't seem interested. Der waz also all these fancy lookin' nets, and hoses and pumps and all sorts of thangs that I waz guessin' waz for dez fish. Der waz a table with dez fancy lookin' trophies on it that I waz figurin' must be for dem fish that fella said was gettin' prizes.

I walked 'round sum more tryin't to figure it all out. Der waz folks with fish on their shirts. Ladies had fish hangin' from their ears and round their necks. Seems like thez folks was really into dez fish. Still seems like dey might be some good eatin' to me.

On my way home I still couldn't figure it all out, when I saw ol' Fred. "You ain't gonna believe what I just saw down at that dar koi show".

FALL HARVEST SALE!

Lotus Land Koi Farm

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Bug Bites

By: John Devlin, KHA

Bug Bites is a series of short educational articles on the common parasitic infections associated with Koi. Each quarterly NCKWS newsletter will feature an article on a different parasite, its impact on Koi, how to determine if the parasite is prevalent as well as commonly accepted treatment techniques. Please note - the author is not a veterinarian and makes no recommendations or claims on treatment or the success of any treatment. These articles are for educational purposes only and should not replace the advice of a licensed veterinarian.

Flukes:



Flukes are a type of flatworm commonly found on Koi and other ornamental fish. There are two major types of freshwater flukes that impact Koi: Gill Flukes (*Dactylogyrus*) and Skin Flukes (*Gyrodactylus*) – but hundreds of sub-species exist for each.

Gill flukes, as the name implies, are commonly found on the gill filaments of the host fish. They can grow up to 1mm in length, although normally are a bit smaller, and can also be found on the skin. Each fluke has hooks on its bottom that it uses to attach to the host fish. Gill flukes can be identified by having 4 eye spots on the top – they are suspected to be light sensitive and thus can see the shadow of passing fish. Each gill fluke (which is both male & female at the same time) produces a single egg (about 40µm) after mating with another fluke. The eggs, depending on water temperature, can

hatch in as little as 4 days. Each fluke, again depending on temperature, can produce between 12-20 eggs/hr. If you add it all up → that's a lot of parasites when the water is warm (say +70oF).

Skin Flukes, although similar looking to gill flukes can be distinguished by the lack of eye spots and produce live young. These youngsters immediately attach to the host. The skin fluke has a similar proliferation for reproduction – and it is believed that the embryo actually produces a fertilized egg while still in the mother!

Fortunately for us, diagnosis of flukes is relatively easy via a microscopic examination of skin scrapes & gill snips. Under 40x magnification – if you see dancing worms – you've probably got flukes! Flukes, like most other parasites cause flashing of the host fish, which in turn can open skin lesions and in the presence of certain bacteria (e.g. *aeromonas*) may result in ulcers.

Common treatment techniques for flukes utilize Praziquantel, SupraVerm (do not use with Goldfish), Potassium Permanganate or Fluke Tabs. Remember, flukes live on the host, feeding on blood or mucus, but they also swim freely and lay eggs on plants, etc. – thus treatment of the entire pond system is appropriate. Recommendation for treating with Praziquantel (used by the author) calls for adding 2.5mg/L to the pond environment (proper volume calculation is essential) via dissolving in alcohol (I use Vodka) to cause a slurry. This is then further diluted in a 5 gallon bucket of water, mixed vigorously – then added to the pond around all the edges. Praziquantel is listed as safe for plants and the pond's biological filter.

Remember any diagnosis or treatment should be under the direction of a licensed state veterinarian.

NCKWS Koi of the Year



The 2008 NCKWS Koi of the Year is an eight years old, 65cm female Jimbei kohaku owned by Philip and JoAnne Bronikowski.

This koi was chosen as KOY by winning the NCKWS annual photo contest judged by Art Lembke.

To see entrants from other club, please visit:
www.akca.org <http://www.akca.org>

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27th Annual AKCA Seminar, Jacksonville, FL

By: Robert Mungo

What is a Koi Seminar as opposed to a Koi Show? That's the question I kept asking myself every time I saw the advertising in the KOI USA magazine. Since it was being held in one of our favorite vacation spots, we made arrangements to go. Jacksonville is a great river town and the Hyatt has a great view. There are several fine restaurants with great views also. And then there's the beach. Well enough about the town, let's talk about the seminar.



The first day all the AKCA Judges and candidate judges met for updates and exchange of information. Those studying the Koi Health Advisors (KHA) material completed their final exam and received their designations. The koi hobbyists came in on the second day and the seminar began. There were multiple sessions going at the same time so you could choose a session that interests you. Friday morning I attended a judging session. This was very exciting and educational. Teams of judges (4) were brought up to the front. Then pictures of 4 koi were projected on the big screen. The judges would rank these 1-4. We all had our own score sheets and ranked them also. I was doing ok until the Tanchos came up. I asked Judge James Reilly if the red spot was the most important thing to consider. He said yes. On this variety you find the one with best spot first and then make sure the body is ok. When the judges announced their decisions, they gave reports on how they reached the rankings. After the teams had judged all the koi, we tallied up our individual score sheets. The person with the most correct picks received a prize. It was not me. This one session was worth the whole trip for me. To be able to hear how the judges came to their

selections was very enlightening. To hear them discuss what features they looked at and how they decided which features were most important or dominant will be very helpful in future purchases.

Part two of the judging seminar was held on Saturday morning. It was even better than the first part. In this session we were assigned to a judging team and judged live koi. How exciting! Here I am standing with 4 other judges and a candidate judge looking over 4 koi in a show tank and listening to them judge the koi. I was on the team with James Reilly, Grant Patton, Bryan Bateman, and new candidate judge Mike Frady, WOW! I think I got a little star struck when they asked me what I thought about the fish. We judged a tank of kohaku and then a tank of showa. We had to switch out and let others join the teams for the sanke and shiro. While others were with the live judging we went back to the main room and watched on video. After all the teams had judged each tank it was then time to review the rankings of all the teams. It was interesting to see that the teams did not always agree on how the fish should be ranked. Each team had to explain or defend their rankings. Then all the judges had to vote for a Grand Champion, Reserve Champion, and Tategoi (koi for the future). Seeing that the judges did not always agree with each other explains how a fish that does well at one show may not do as well at the next show. The competition at the show as well as different judges will render different results.

Jasper Kuijper of Evolution Aqua in the United Kingdom held a session to explain his research on what koi should be eating and how they should be fed. Roger



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covered Jasper's research in our last issue. I talked to Jasper after his session about big fish and little fish eating together. His research shows that little fish do not get their share of the food when together. They are bumped around and intimidated. Later I had the opportunity to ask Judge Ray Jordon what he thought about Jasper. He said even though it went against the industry standard some of it made sense. He was going to get some of the EA food and give Jasper's theory a try.

sessions on the new varieties, the Internet message boards and still others; but I couldn't attend them all. In between the sessions was the vendor area. It was quite extensive. Everything you ever needed in the hobby was there. I was able to purchase a show tub at a 40% discount with no shipping. Thank you Aquatic Eco-Systems. I almost got the feeder I've been waiting for but one of the judges was looking at it and I thought it might not be a good thing to buy it out from under him.



There was a session on parasites detection. There were pictures or video clips projected on the big screen of what the parasites looked like under the microscope. There were discussions on their swimming patterns, life cycles, and how they attacked the fish. Another session had a panel of American Breeders. They were Matt from Quality Koi, Joe from Blackwater Creek, and Brett from Brett's Fish Farm. It was interesting to hear what they were trying to accomplish with their breeding program and how they were going about it. There were

The 2009 seminar will be held in another great water city, San Diego. The dates have been moved back to February 11-15 to take advantage of the weather and for the first time it will coincide with a full Koi Show. The Koi Club of San Diego at Marriott San Diego Mission Valley Hotel will host it. It is being promoted as one of the biggest koi shows ever in the states. Mark your calendars now and don't let it slip up on you (www.akca.org).

Tips on Selecting, Preparing and Showing Koi

By: Dan Phillips, KHA

Tips on selecting, preparing and showing koi is not a judge's perspective on the koi variety standards (see Art Lembke's article in this issue of Koi USA), but is from an entrant's (novice to experienced) standpoint. This article intends to aid the koi hobbyist in selecting and preparing appropriate candidates to bring to a koi show based on any number of factors.

First, I highly recommend learning how each of the different koi variety standards is defined (see Art Lembke's article in this issue of Koi USA.) This will help you select a koi that most closely resembles the standard by which it will be judged. THIS IS KEY!

Ask yourself if the koi show you intend on entering is one of the MAJOR koi shows across the country or a smaller local show? In general (but not always the case), the competition will be greater and have more depth (number of high quality entries per variety/size) at a MAJOR show such as the MAKC annual show or Koi America. If your goal is to win a top trophy at a MAJOR show, you will only want to enter your top grade koi in each class. Only koi of the highest quality will receive serious consideration from the judges. Else you will achieve greater success taking your best koi to a smaller local show and come home with your share of hardware.

Another factor to consider is whether the show will be indoors or outdoors. The venue's lighting (artificial or natural) can play a factor in selection. Different colors on koi look better in different lighting situations. The hi of Kohaku looks best in natural sunlight, as it tends to get washed out in cool white fluorescent lighting. Some indoor koi show venues attempt to minimize this effect by replacing some or all cool white fluorescents with full spectrum lights, but this is very expensive. Best case for an indoor venue is the presence of skylights for natural light. On the converse, sumi is not as adversely affected by indoor lighting.

An interesting tidbit I've learned is to place Showa and Shiro Utsuri types that have been crossed with platinum Ogons (Gin Showa and Gin Shiro) in a blue show bowl (cover with a net in case you have a jumper!) Wait 5

minutes and see what happens to the black. The sumi of a good show candidate will not turn grayish, but will keep the same strong black as when first taken out of the pond.

Some koi just seem to take the rigors involved in showing (netting, bagging, transporting, different water conditions, being in a show tank for three days with lots of people crowding around them) better than others. Sometimes you don't know this until a koi has been taken to a show. One way to get a feel is to setup a show tank at your home in advance of the show and give it a trial run. Place all the koi you intend on taking to the show in your show tank for a few hours and see how they each react. I have one koi that for whatever reason, flushes its gills with blood whenever netted. I do not take this (once Best in Size 7) beautiful gin rin Chagoi to shows any more.

One other thing to consider is , "overall tank presentation" or combinations of koi in a tank that best complement one another. Here are some tips provided by a few AKCA judges I asked regarding the subject:

- Do not put two koi of the same variety in a tank as they can be compared making one look worse than the other. If placed in different tanks they both can compete and not be compared to each other. For instance red is better on one than on another.
- If you have a large fish you are trying to show off, put it in a tank with smaller fish. If two large fish are together they will just look the same rather than one looking huge.

So, I do not put two of the same variety in the same tank. I also mix types, say Kohaku and Shiro Utsuri this way there are no comparisons. I also mix sizes, this way the koi I want to highlight, will make a big impression.

Also determine the position of the morning sun at the show. You can plan if you want to be in the sun or shade. For example, a Gin or Hikari show better in sun, by contrast, a Gosanke shows better in partial shade. If the hi is a little weak on your fish try for shaded tank to

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hide thickness of hi.

I have no proof of this, but I have wondered if a great fish may be overlooked because it is in a dirty tank. Would a judge overlook a great fish because it is placed with lower grade fish? Or would it, on the other hand, stand out more? Of course most judges would like to think that their objectivity is not influenced by such things. After all, each fish is looked at individually when judging.

Preparing koi for show can take one month or one year. Koi, which have been grown out in a mud pond, can put on a lot of size and girth. On the other hand, colors tend to go down for various reasons while in the mud (patterns stretch for example.) Mouths can be discolored from all the digging in the mud they do all summer. Prior to a show, koi need to be "finished" in a concrete or hobbyist pond after being harvested from the mud pond. This can take months or years! This gives time for colors to thicken and shiro to clean up from being in the mud. Usually, color food (containing spirulina) is fed for some period of time before a show to brighten up colors even more. But too much color food can make the shiro turn a little yellowish. Here's where some hobbyist will not divulge their "secrets" on show preparation in order to gain an edge over the competition. Types of food used and for how long is top secret! Other closely held secrets are things some may do to renew a koi's slime coat, etc.

Koi should be purged (not fed) for a period of 4-5 days before being entered for competition. Something else I like to do is to move the koi into a (clean, filtered) show

tank for one additional day at the end. This will prevent them from eating the algae on pond walls. This algae will end up at the bottom of the show tank even though the koi have not been fed koi pellets. Nothing is more distracting than a show tank with cloudy water and with fish waste all over the bottom. This is a clear indication the koi owner did not properly prepare his/her koi before the show.

In addition, moving them into a show tank one day before makes departure time less stressful since you are not trying to net koi from your main pond at 5:00AM in the dark!

To further emphasize the importance of a clean show tank with healthy looking koi, KHAs (Koi Health Advisors) at shows around the country have begun to present an award for "healthiest" looking tank.

When is a koi "ready" for show? The belief is a koi has a time in its life when all things come together – colors (hi, sumi, shiro) are thick, solid and uniform, body conformation, size, skin quality, fukurin, etc. The word "finished" is commonly used to describe a koi ready for show. For male koi this tends to come earlier in life (1-5 years), for females this tends to come later in life (5-10 years). There is too much inherent risk & stress (for you & the koi) involved in showing koi to bring them to multiple shows year after year when they are not ready. This author's advice is to only bring a koi to show when it is ready. This minimizes risk and increases the chances of winning a top award in its class.

If you own a koi blessed with genetics which allow it to look its best over a period of years and your koi husbandry skills are advanced enough to maintain or even improve a koi over the same time frame, then consider yourself very fortunate and in a position to have a long show career with this koi.

In addition to the upcoming MAKC show in September, make plans to attend the North Carolina Koi & Watergarden Society's (www.nckws.com) first show this October 10-12, MAX size 21". See www.carolinaclassickoishow.com for complete details.



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NCKWS...Who We Are

NCKWS (North Carolina Koi & Watergardening Society) is an AKCA affiliated (www.akca.org) Koi & Watergardening club formed in 2001 to:

- Create, promote and enlarge the hobby of keeping, breeding, appreciating and exhibiting ...Nishikigoi...as well as water gardening
- To disseminate information about the hobby to the membership of this association and to the public
- To engage in educational social activities related to the hobby and to acquire and own such property as may be necessary for any or all of the foregoing purposes.

NCKWS has 80+ members and growing stronger every month. We strive to meet our members needs in being successful in this great hobby. Monthly meetings provide us the opportunity to share with others our enjoyment of this hobby, to experience each others ponds and koi, to educate one another about all aspects of the hobby (pond building, koi health, water plants, filtration, etc...), to promote the experience of attending/participating in koi shows and as always great food!

So give us a chance to serve you in this great hobby. Check out our website (www.nckws.com) for details of monthly meetings, club activities and contact information. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Small Print

Newsletter material is selected for its interest to koi and watergarden hobbyists. NCKWS accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the content. *Fins and Friends* is published quarterly by the North Carolina Koi and Watergarden Society, a non-profit organization based in the Triangle region of North Carolina.

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NCKWS Membership Form

North Carolina Koi & Watergarden Society (NCKWS) is a non-profit organization and is an Associated Koi Clubs of America (AKCA) affiliated club. NCKWS membership dues are currently \$49 for the first year and \$24 for annual renewal per family. The initial \$49 membership fee includes a name badge for each member. NCKWS corporate membership dues are currently \$49 per year. Corporate membership includes the addition of a link to your company website from the club website for that membership year. If you are interested in joining NCKWS, please complete the following form and mail, with your dues, to our Treasurer or visit our website, www.nckws.com. All information will remain confidential - available only to club members.

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