



Splash

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Next meeting is January 19th at 7:30 PM, Willow Glen Library, our regular meeting place, date, and time. This month is our club's annual business meeting to install new officers, plan for the year, and vote on our revised bylaws.

We had our club's general meeting and holiday party last month where we voted in our new officers for 2016. The holiday party was fun, members brought donations for Toys for Tots, and we had a Holiday Gift Exchange. It was good to spend time with members and celebrate 2015. Cal brought some delicious desserts; the burnt almond cake from Dick's Bakery was extra wonderful! If you missed it, don't worry. We will be planning lots of good events for 2016 that you can attend. Stay tuned.



At this month's meeting we will be having our club's annual meeting to discuss what we what we plan to do as a club this year. We will discuss club business such as: How big should our presence be at the Cherry Blossom Festival? Do you know of ponds for the Pond Tour? What kind of speakers / topics would you like to have at an upcoming meeting? How can we attract more members? Bring your ideas and enthusiasm and join us to kick off an exciting new year!



We will also be voting on our bylaw revisions that we have been working on for the past several months.

Visit our Web Site at: www.sckoi.com

Club Meetings:

The club meets on the third Tuesday of each month except July (Third Friday) and December (No Meeting) in the Willow Glen Public Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave, San Jose, CA 95125. Check the web site Calendar for updates and a map. At our meetings we get acquainted with any guests, address any pond issues from guests or members. We generally follow this with a presentation which is usually related to pond or water gardening. Finally, we enjoy refreshments and open discussion.

Upcoming Events

- Jan 19 SCVKWGC General Meeting, 7:30 PM, Willow Glen Library Meeting Room
Topic: Annual Meeting including installation of officers for 2016.
- Feb 2 SCVKWGC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM, Frank Mullany's home. All members are welcome. (Board meets on the first Tuesday of the month)
- Feb16 SCVKWGC General Meeting, 7:30 PM, Willow Glen Library Meeting Room
Scheduled Speaker: Dr. Jessie Sanders, Aquatic Veterinary Services
- Apr 23-24 Cherry Blossom Festival, Cupertino -- The annual Cherry Blossom Festival honoring Cupertino's sister city of Toyokawa, Japan. The club plans to have an educational display and membership outreach. Volunteers needed.
- Jun 18-19 AKCA Business Meeting, Wet Lab, and Banquet: Cedar Falls, IA
- Jul 16 25th Annual SCVKWGC Pond Tour
- Jul 28-31 (Tentative) The 2016 Santa Clara County Fair -- The club plans to have an educational display and membership outreach. Volunteers needed.
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Club Organization for 2016

It is time to install our officers for 2016. Here is a "BIG" thank you to all those who have stepped up to serve on the board this year as well as to those who serve throughout the year.

President	Cal Hanson
Vice President	Mel Bretzke
Secretary	Diane Stelma
Treasurer	CeCe Sterns
Director	Frank Mullany
Director	Rita Hughes

All of us are looking forward to a great 25th Anniversary for the club in 2016!

Did You Know? A Few Facts About Koi

Compiled From the Mid-Columbia Koi Club

Their maximum life span is about 200 years in exceptional cases. Normal life span is more like 25 to 35 years if cared for properly.

Their maximum length is about 3 feet depending upon blood line and proper care.

Koi have no stomach, but have a straight gut. In warm water, koi will digest their food in about 4 hours. For

maximum growth, they should be fed what they will eat at 4 hour intervals.

Koi will eat many things; however it is best to feed them a well-balanced koi food, containing at least 30% protein.

The value of a koi mostly depends upon size, pattern, and color. Realistically, a koi is only worth what someone is willing to pay.

Koi can withstand a wide range of temperatures and pH values; however a rapid change in either value can cause undue stress and many times will cause death. (Water temperatures from 45° F to 90° F, and pH from 6.5 to 9.0)



Koi ponds should have areas that are at least 3 feet deep for koi to hibernate in winter, and should have some shade so they will not sunburn (in very shallow water) in summer.

Koi are "schooling" type fish that desire to be with other koi. To keep your koi content, always have more than one koi in your pond or tank.

Koi continually excrete ammonia into their surrounding water. If the ammonia level is allowed to become excessive, koi can no longer excrete their waste ammonia and can die from ammonia poisoning. Do not over crowd your pond with fish, and do not over feed. Either condition will add ammonia to the water. A good biological converter will absorb the ammonia and keep your fish healthy.

Koi get oxygen from the water through absorption in their gills, where oxygen is absorbed directly into their blood stream. Pond water should be kept well oxygenated all year by waterfalls or other forms of aeration.

Koi Produce thousands of eggs during spawning season. Male fish fertilize the eggs by spraying the eggs with milt. If the eggs are laid in an open area, they are quickly eaten by the other koi. Baby koi will hatch in 3 – 7 days depending upon water temperature. Less than 50 percent will survive.

Koi get along well with other species of fish, as long as the other fish are not aggressive. Koi will eat their young until the fry show some color on their bodies.

After transporting koi to another location, float their water bag in the new pond or tank about 30 minutes to equalize water temperature before releasing them. Do not pour water from the bag into the pond or tank. This is a bad practice and can spread disease and/or parasites.

Most koi have some parasites. Most parasites are microscopic and cannot be seen without the aid of a microscope. A trained specialist can examine your fish and determine if your pond or fish should be treated to eradicate parasites.

Know the water volume of your pond. Koi can be placed under undue stress and sometimes die because the pond owner over dosed their pond with medication algacides, or other additives. It is important to know the pond water volume when applying these additives. Proper concentrations will generally not cause undue stress to the fish.

How to Clean Clogged Pond Sump Pumps and Filter Screens

There are ways to decrease the amount of maintenance sump pumps and filter screens need.

By Stephen M. Meyer

Q. We built a 6,000-gallon pond a few years ago. The pond is well-planted and we keep about a dozen koi. This is a liner pond. We circulate and filter the pond water with a 1,600-gallon-per-hour sump pump that sits at the deep end of the pond. The outflow hose from the pump runs along the pond floor, up the side (underneath some rocks) and then to the top of a waterfall.

Our problem is that the sump pump is always clogging with leaves and other debris. We have to clean out that pump every day to keep the water flowing. Changing the size of the filter screen does not seem to matter. What can we do to reduce the maintenance?

A. This is a common problem in well-landscaped backyard ponds with very-high-flow-rate submersible pumping systems. The suction from the pump is so great that it draws in debris from across the pond floor, quickly clogging the works. A partial solution is to manually clear the pond floor using a swimming pool leaf-raking net on a long extension pole to remove as much of the leaves and other material as possible. This probably needs to be done only a few times in the early spring and late fall. This procedure will undoubtedly cloud the water with all kinds of temporarily suspended matter. So it might also be a good time to do a 30-percent or greater pond water change. Pump out the cloudy pond water first, then refill. The koi will not mind the temporary mess.

You might also think about installing a higher capacity in-pond mechanical filter screen for your pump. There are many ways to do this, so let me suggest a simple and inexpensive version, and you can improvise. Purchase a plastic hamper with gridded sides at any department store. Place some large stones in the bottom and submerge the hamper in your backyard pond. Now place the submersible pump inside the hamper, resting on the stones. That's it.

This approach has two drawbacks. First, a plastic hamper sitting in your backyard pond will be a less-than-attractive feature, so you may want to think about ways to hide or disguise it. For example, live aquatic plants (such as water lilies or water hyacinths, or a tall stand of cattails) and ceramic water features can be used as a screen.

Second, extensive removal of the leaf litter and debris sitting on the pond floor will destroy much of the backyard pond's natural value for aquatic invertebrates. Dragonfly larvae, caddisfly larvae, a host of beetles, snails, and tons of other near-microscopic critters live down there and are very beneficial to pond ecology. Not the least of which is the fact that they are food for small pond fish. An alternative, then, is to move the entire pumping system outside the backyard pond to an external basin. Although it does represent a bit more work than my earlier suggestion, the maintenance and operation benefits are substantial, as are the aesthetics.

The external basin can be any size — from a standard 32-gallon rubber trash pail to a 150-gallon PVC horse trough, or even larger. It should be situated within a few feet of the backyard pond and sunk into the ground so that the top of the basin is just an inch or so above the water level of the backyard pond. If you are worried about jeopardizing the integrity of the pond liner, the basin can be connected hydraulically to the backyard pond by a large (in your case, 3-inch) siphon tube made from PVC pipe. This

definitely works, but it is awkward and unsightly (again, there are ingenious methods for hiding the siphon pipe with aquatic plants, etc.).

Alternatively, you can connect the pond and basin with an underground pipe. You will need a special liner fitting to connect the pipe, and a bulkhead fitting to put through the basin wall. If you cannot find a 3-inch fitting you can use four 1½-inch pipes to get the same basic volume and flow. I would pierce the backyard pond wall at mid-level, not at the bottom. You do not want to disturb the floor too much. Now place your hamper/pump inside the basin and you are set to go. Turning on the pump draws water into the basin, where accompanying leaves and other debris are trapped. Occasional cleaning involves nothing more than shutting off the pump, removing the hamper/pump and scooping out the gunk.

Water Plant of the Month - Blue Flag [Iris virginica]

Blue flag and other irises often are perennial plants that are found in shallow water along shorelines and in wet areas. Stems grow in clusters from the base, usually single or double-branched, and can be from less than a foot tall to over 3 feet. Leaves are sword-like or blade-like. Flowers are on an elongated stem that usually rises above the leaves. Six-petaled iris-like flowers (actually 3 petals and 3 sepals) can be bluish-purple to violet in blue flag to white, yellow, or copper-colored in other iris species. Flowers are fragrant. Irises have shallow roots and can spread from the roots.



Submerged portions of all aquatic plants provide habitats for many micro and macro invertebrates. These invertebrates in turn are used as food by fish and other wildlife species.

Source: Texas A&M Aquaplant Directory, <http://aquaplant.tamu.edu>

Don't Neglect Your Pond

The importance of a good winter cleaning

By Mel Bretzke, Advanced Landscape Systems

I know it is not fun working on your pond in the winter but it is important to perform the proper maintenance in order to prevent problems in the spring. When the temperature drops your pond and fish enter into a semi-dormant state making it the ideal time for a deep cleaning. The leaves have all dropped and the water plants are overgrown with many of them freezing back. I like to start out by cleaning the filtration system. I rinse off filter mats and media using a small pump and hose drawing water from the pond. This method cleans off the dead bacteria and accumulated debris while preserving some of the live bacteria.

If an external skimmer or settling tank is used, drain and clean while the water level in the pond is low. If you have water plants this is the time of year to either head them back or reduce their size by removing the plant and replacing with a small sprig. To clean the waterfall or stream vacuum any leaves then rinse it down and pump out the dirty water keeping it out of the pond.

The final step is to vacuum the bottom. If you have rocks in the bottom of your pond you may need to remove the fish and drain the pond to ensure you get all the waste hiding under the gravel. This is also a good time to consider removing the rock for good so you will avoid the need to drain the pond each year. It is important to get all debris and organic waste out of your pond before the water warms in the spring. This waste can produce harmful bacteria affecting your fish in the spring.

Remember to stop feeding when the water drops below 50 degrees. If you feed your fish use a wheat germ winter food as protein is difficult for fish to metabolize in cold water. We need lots of rain this year but keep in mind it could change your PH levels. Water changes are the best way to bring it back to its normal range. If you dread the thought of getting into that cold water you could always call one of our pond service providers for assistance. Construction slows in the winter and it helps us keep busy.

Membership

Club dues are \$30.00 per year and you can join anytime. Our membership year is July 1 to June 30, so if you join before then, your dues will be prorated at the rate of \$2.50 per month until the next membership term starts. To join, send your name, address, phone number and email address along with your check for dues to SCVKWG, PO Box 9006, San Jose, CA 95157 or via email at scvkwg@gmail.com.

General Meeting Review – December 2015

Club Business

Our regular monthly meeting was held 12/15/15. We elected our slate of officers and for 2016 and added Mel Bretzke as Vice President. We also once again discussed our bylaws and the boards proposed revisions. These documents may be found on the clubs website in the library section under references.

Party / Social

We had a fun time having pizza, dessert, and a gift exchange following our quick general meeting. We pulled tickets for the gift exchange and everyone went home with a nice gift. We collected many donations for Toys for Tots. Thank you members for your generosity

Dessert

Thank you Cal who brought dessert – we had cheesecake and an amazing chocolate burnt almond cake from Dick's Bakery in Willow Glen. If you would like to sign up to bring dessert to a meeting please contact Eve at bretzko@sbcglobal.net. Thanks to everyone who helped out with refreshments and pond socials this year.

Board Meeting Review – January 2016

The January Board meeting was held Tuesday evening, 01/12/16, the meeting was rescheduled do to schedule conflicts of several board members. Frank, Cal, Eve, Mel, Maus, Cece, Diane, Kay, were in attendance.

The bylaw revision changes have been approved by and will be voted on by the membership as required. The 2016 slate was elected, Mel Bretzke was voted on as Vice President at the December meeting, along with being this year's Pond Tour Chairman. We also discussed our 2016 plan and event schedule. We also discussed the option to purchase Director and Officer Insurance for our club and the club budget.

We have begun preparations for the 2016 Pond Tour and have a number of ponds that we are evaluating now. If you have or know of a pond that you would like to see on the pond tour please let us know. Please send a photo, short description, and location via to email scvkwg@gmail.com. Better yet, attend one of our meetings and tell us in person.

You club officers are getting up to speed with their new duties. Please bear with us during the transition time. We all are looking forward to a good year.

Monthly Club Report to Associated Koi Clubs of America (AKCA)

With our President, Secretary, and some new Officers stepping up to take the lead, the SCVKWGC will once again focus its January meeting as a planning session for 2016 including participating in some local events as well host our 25th Annual Pond Tour taking place on July 16, 2016. This promises to be another great year to get involved in the Koi hobby and be part of our club.

NOTE: The above report will be added to AKCA board Minutes and will be posted on AKCA website for all to see under our name as Santa Clara Valley Koi and Water Garden Club. Check <http://www.akca.org> and click on Koi Clubs.

Have something to share...

Let us know if you have comments or want to share something Koi related in the Splash or at our meetings. Contact us at scvkwg@gmail.com or let us know at a meeting.

Our Sponsors

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