

Koi Joy – The pleasures of water gardening

Water gardening is a great hobby for everyone. It can be as simple as a fountain or bog planter to lake size ponds stocked with award winning koi. A good selection of plants not only enhances the beauty of your water garden but also adds to the tranquility of the environment.

There are many varieties of water plants from which to choose. Plants that compliment the rest of your landscaping should be the primary criteria determining selection, but additional factors to consider are the amount of available sunlight, the lack or presence of fish, and the plants natural resistance to diseases and insects.

Three categories of water plants to include in your garden are, submersible plants that grow under the water, marginal plants that like their feet wet and ankles dry and plants that float on top of the water.

For submersible plants my two favorites are water lilies and lotus. Both of these grow in soil below the surface of the water while their foliage and blooms float or extend above the surface. There are many varieties and colors and most prefer full sun and still water. These plants are not recommended for a Koi pond. Because of their size, Koi can be quite destructive and your pond may quickly become a muddy mess.

Sagittaria is a marginal plant. It does well in just about all conditions. Particularly in a koi pond where it can grow to a height of 3 feet in sun or shade.

Other marginals that have done well for me are Sweet Flag, a hardy clumping grass type plant. It does well in sun or shade, is salt tolerant and winters well.

Taro is an elephant ear type plant that is a beautiful deep purple color. It grows best in filtered sun. It has a low tolerance for salt.

Water hibiscus is good for sun to filtered sun and has beautiful bright colored flowers.

Iris is most beautiful in the spring. They are available in a multitude of colors and styles. It grows well in sun or filtered sun and is salt tolerant.

Pickerel weed grows in sun or shade and produces white or blue blooms during the summer. It has deep green heart shaped leaves and grows to a height of 30 inches.

Inpatients make great bog or marginal plants for the shade or filtered shade water garden.

There are water-loving plants that grow wild all over Florida. Due to disease and parasites do not pick up a wild plants and place them in your Koi pond. I learned from experience. It could become a death sentence for your fish. One last thing, when planting new plants into your water garden sterilizes them first. A simple mixture of 1 cup of bleach to 5 gallons of water works well. Dip the entire plant, rinse well with fresh water and plant.

Upcoming events

Central Florida koi show

For information www.cfks.org

For questions about water gardening and koi contact me at

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