

Koi Joy – The pleasures of water gardening

Location, location, location isn't only the first three rules of retail stores; it also tops the list when planning your pond. Your pond needs to be on the high point of your property, or the site built up, to prevent fertilizer and pesticide runoff from entering.

One of the pleasures of having a pond is being able to relax by it. Keeping your backyard paradise pleasant will require some general maintenance so convenience to the house is the next item on the list.

The amount of sun is also high on the list. Relaxing under a shady tree next to your pond is very comfortable, but scooping leaves and other debris from your pond every day may become more of a nuisance than you bargained for. One plus for a sunny location is most of the bog plants prefer sun. Which means locate your pond where it gets some shade without being directly under trees. We positioned our pond in full sun but provide a mixture of sun and shade with shade sails rigged over the pond.

Soil consistency is another consideration. My husband and I moved here from Houston, Texas where the soil is very heavy clay based and digging a hole big enough for a pond is a difficult at best. When we planned our pond here we discovered the soil was mostly sand but decided the water in the pond would keep the sides from caving. We rented a backhoe and dug until we hit water. We put in the liner, deck and rock work, landscaped, and filled it with fish. It was beautiful. We were very proud of ourselves and the environment we created.

Then came the rainy season. The accumulation of water around the pond combined with the sand, effectively neutralizing the idea of the pond water holding the sides in place. The combination of water and sand outside the pond outweighed the water in the pond and the sides caved pushing the liner up and misshaping our pond. Our one-year-old pond had to be redone. Out came the fish, the deck and the water. We pulled back the liner, dug out the sides again and shored them up with a wall of cinder blocks. A little research would have prevented the redo.

All ponds also require electricity for pumps and lighting. But that's next month's column.

On May 30th and 31st, the First Coast Koi Club is combining with North Florida Koi club for our annual pond tour. It's a great opportunity to see what others are doing and gather ideas for your pond. Be sure to ask the pond owners questions. They're always very happy to explain how their pond is set up and why.

Email me with questions at Dale@DWhaley.com and check out our koi club website for details on the pond tour. WWW.FirstCoastKoiClub.com.