

Koi Joy – The pleasures of water gardening

You are what you eat applies to the koi world as well as for us. For koi to thrive they need a balanced diet combining both commercially prepared and fresh foods.

When selecting a commercially prepared food, remember to read the label. For Koi, a nutritional diet should include proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and pigments. If corn is listed near the top of the ingredients avoid it. The proteins should be derived from seafood and are a large portion of a fish diet. Although they receive most of their protein through the commercial food, you can supplement the protein by feeding them hard-boiled eggs, shrimp, black-eyed peas, and dark green leafy vegetables.

Depending on the age of the fish, 7 to 10% of their diet should be in fats. The proper percentage helps promote absorption of vitamins A, D, E and k. Too much fat leads to health problems.

All foods decrease in nutritional value over time and most have a shelf life of about three months if stored in a cool dry place.

A regular supply of vitamins is required as fish do not store them in their tissues. A lack of vitamin C is a common problem for koi. During the processing of commercial food it is either destroyed or has a very short shelf life. Vitamin C can be supplemented by adding slices of watermelon, oranges and other citrus fruits. Just throw in the slices and watch the party begin. They love this stuff. They won't eat the rinds so scoop them out when they finish.

Minerals are obtained through the water and the diet. Minerals support strong bones, muscles and teeth. Yes Koi do have teeth! One bottom row in the back of the throat.

Pigments are added to their diet to enhance their colors. Pigments found in peppers, carrots, green veggies, shrimp, and even paprika are added to commercial food to enhance the fishes coloring.

One entertaining aspect of having Koi is hand feeding them. They are easily trained with some of their favorite foods and a little patience. Shrimp works well for me. Cut it into bite sizes and very quietly hold it just under the surface of the water. It may take some time but be patient. Always feed them from the same spot. The older fish will feed from your hand quicker than the young ones. I do this on a regularly to bring the fish in close enough to get a good look and see if there are any health issues developing.

Fish are cold blooded so their metabolism depends on the temperature of the the water. The warmer the pond water the greater their nutrition needs and the number of feedings. When the water temperature starts dropping, reduce the number of feedings. If the water temperature drops below 55 degrees discontinue feeding altogether.

Up coming events

First Coast Koi Club Koi Show – Oct 3rd and 4th.

For questions contact me at Dale@dwhaley.com