



# Scales & Tales

**First Coast Koi, Goldfish and Water Garden Club**

Dec. 2009

[www.firstcoastkoiclub.com](http://www.firstcoastkoiclub.com)

Volume 8, No. 11

## Next Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 5th at 6:00 pm



**At the Home of Peggy Morris  
9240 Waterglen Lane  
Jacksonville, 32256**

**Call to RSVP-538-9453**

**From Southside Blvd.** take Baymeadows East (toward 9A). Go under the 9A overpass to traffic light at RG Skinner Parkway (first traffic light after 9A). Turn right at traffic light and keep straight to Sweetwater Entrance. (There is a temporary stop sign due to road construction). Continue to guard house and gates. (code reader is outside guard house).

Continue along Del Webb Parkway (clubhouse and lake on left) to tennis courts on your right. Immediately after tennis courts turn right onto Waterglen Lane. 9240 is the first two story house (on the corner of Waterglen & Waterspring).

**From 9A...** Exit at Baymeadows Road... head east following directions above.

## From our President

Hi Club Members,

I hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving Holiday with plenty of turkey and trimmings. This is our last newsletter for 2009 and it seems like this year flew by, well, like the saying goes. Time fly's when you're having fun and fun we had.

It has been a very busy year for our club with many activities and events but I believe all that participated had fun and enjoyed themselves. I would like to thank all the members for their support and help in 2009 and hope we continue making this club more fun, educational and friendly. Also a thank you to our board members for a Job well done.

Our election is set for December 5<sup>th</sup> and there is still time to enter names to the ballot. We will also be electing the Koi Person of the Year. Please contact Don Whaley @718-0176 if you like to run for any office or know someone that is interested.

The Christmas party and election of new officers will be hosted by Peggy Morris on Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. Please bring a gift for the gift exchange if you like to participate (\$15). I hope all members have made plans to attend.

Teresa and I wish all the members and their families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Koi lover year. Fred

**Peggy lives in a gated community and the Guard leaves his post at 6PM so if you arrive after 6PM call Peggy at 538-9453, or any of the club officers cell phones and we will give you the gate code via phone.**

## Officers & Contacts

**President:** Fred Leib 268-3582

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**Webmaster:** Don Whaley 718-0175

**Equipment Mgr:** Jim Mattingly 733-6831

**DISCLAIMER:** The Editor, the Board, or the Club as a whole has not verified the reliability of articles published, and cannot accept any responsibility for the use or misuse of products or information provided in this or future newsletters.

If you wish to participate in a gift exchange please bring a gift valued at no more than \$15. At this annual event officers for the new year are elected as well as Koi person of the year. You must be present to vote.

With that in mind the FCKC election committee is accepting nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer along with Koi person of the year. Send your nominations to [Don@DWhaley.com](mailto:Don@DWhaley.com).



### Koi Joy – The pleasures of water gardening

Even with our tropical climate in Jacksonville, the dropping temperatures signal it is time to get out of that hammock you've spent time in all summer enjoying your pond and prepare it for winter.

Fish and aquatic plants have different needs in the winter and the better care you give your pond during the winter, the healthier your fish will be in the spring.

Clean all filters and pumps and do 25% water change. Remember to keep all pumps running, maintain aeration and continue your maintenance routine during the winter months.

Floating plants should be thrown out or moved to a green house. Trim all aquatic plants, and cut back any marginal plants that could fall into the water when they die off. For the water lilies, cease fertilizing and trim off all vegetation. Sink your water Lillies to the bottom of your pond in case of frost.

Vacuum or remove any fallen leaves from your pond so there is no deteriorating vegetation to spoil the water. A build up of dead vegetation reduces oxygen levels in the pond stressing fish. If your pond acquires a lot of debris during fall, it can be helpful to net the pond for a few weeks making it easier to remove.

In the fall continue feeding the fish with protein enriched foods to prepare them for the winter. As water temperatures begin dropping they require less protein in the diet due to slowing metabolism. Specially formulated foods for fall and spring are readily available that are designed to help your fish prepare for and recover from winter. Because we feed our fish most of the year, winter formulated foods will have wheat germ as a primary ingredient so it will digest quickly. But remember to discontinue feeding your fish when the water temperature drops to 50 degrees or less. Fish can't digest food when it is cold and the undigested food can cause ulcers in the digestive tract. My friend Tom, who is the current VP of the First Coast Koi Club, has a saying "Over 55 keeps 'em alive". This is close enough for me and easy to remember.

We have found at our house when the water temperatures drop and the fish in the river and lakes go deeper in the water is when the herons start dropping by so provide protection from them.

If you have any questions feel free to email me at [Dale@DWhaley.com](mailto:Dale@DWhaley.com)

## November Meeting Minutes

The November meeting of the FCKC was called to order on the 15th with 12 members present. Fred has asked for the pictures from the show of our Grand Champion. If none were taken to submit to KOI USA, then we would have the Hardcastle's take one for us.

Members had been invited to the Hardcastle's for the annual BBQ of the Gainesville Koi Club on Saturday the 14th. Fred commented on the size of the fish David & Karen have explaining that David believes in having one fish per 500 gallons.

Dale Whaley has asked for help with the plants for the upcoming Epic Plant Sale. We will have a printed work schedule made so everyone can participate in the preparation of the plants. We will try to limit the plants to water plants, iris', bleeding hearts and plumeria. Bill Torrance has also suggested angel trumpets and sago palms.

Fred has suggested a koi auction in the spring with the possibility of also having a young fish show at the same time. Fred will check on time and location. The club will not be participating at the Zoo's annual "Spring into Bloom". Upcoming events are to include Central FL show in March, auction in April, Epic in April and Pond Tour in May.

Fred has volunteered to use one of his above ground pools for koi rescue. He will have Don put his phone number on our website.

Our December meeting will be our annual Christmas Party at Peggy Morris' home on December 5th. Please call Peggy and let her know what side dish you will be bringing. The time is at 6PM and if the guard is gone please call Peggy at 538-4593 so she can get you through the gate. We will have a gift exchange of pond related items with a limit of \$15. Bring a gift get a gift. The elections will be held then and the Koi Person of the Year will also be selected. Teresa Lawrence will no longer be writing the newsletter so this position will also need to be filled. Please call Don Whaley or email him @ [Don@dwhealey.com](mailto:Don@dwhealey.com) for nominations.

**Libby Mattingly, Secretary**



**Pictures from our fieldtrip to the Hardcastle's home in November.**

### **It is time to SAVE your carp as winter approaches!**

The hard truth is, your koi have been preparing themselves for winter all the while you were enjoying them rush to the pellets you were throwing in the pond last month and the month before!

koi KNOW what time of year it is. No, they don't wear watches or have calendars or black berries--- but they do have something even better!

Koi have genetic memory in the form of instinct and they have adaptative physiology. They have organs for detecting change in both temperature and light. And they have a primal biological clock that moves there endocrine system into an entirely different mode as the 'signals' of temperature, light and dietary changes (both in calorie intake and protein/carb mix) give 'hints' of things to come. Interesting enough, we see this in birds every fall as their behavior changes and things like migration

begin, but we also seem to have a blind spot when it comes to our carp.

I recall reading a bit of advice from a bird watcher type who admonished the reader not to begin feeding native song birds in late autumn only to abandon them via an empty feeder when winter came in full force. The writer pointed out that the local birds really needed to begin what nature had build into them in terms of survival and that feeding and then stopping had the effect of keeping the birds around locally until it was too late to escape the ravages of winter- dooming many of them to starvation and exposure.

There is a lesson there for new koi keepers. We feed our koi out of kindness and tend to treat them like the family dog or cat. But koi are carp, not collies! They are very primitive and very 'committed' to their primitive physiology and instinct. In a way, they are 'smarter' then their owners about what their needs are as winter approaches.

So here are a few things you need to keep in mind while you fill the bird feeder with seeds and your koi's gut with yet another summer to autumn meal---

Koi 'may' be eating the same pellets they ate last month and the month before, but their bodies are using the digested food in a different way. Those calories and amino acids are no longer being used to grow long and strong. Those calories are now, more 'physiologically expensive' to bring down to raw energy and are now being used for operation and the rest for storage.

There are two major schools of thought about diet at this point in feeding carp in a closed system;

- 1) feed wheat germ pellets in ever and ever smaller amounts as temperatures drop. Quitting at 50 F and ABSOLUTELY at 46 F for the entire winter.
- 2) switch to wheat germ and fresh foods as they are easier to digest in cooler water (for cold blooded animals). Again slowing to zero at 50 F and absolutely no feeding at 46 under any circumstances.

As a side comment; some advanced hobbyists will feed koi in general, a certain number of times a day as long as fish take the food eagerly. Other advanced hobbyists will limit the meals to once or twice or three times a day regardless of the appetite demand. And reduce feeding to one every few days in that limbo temperature world between 55- 50 F.

James P. Reilly

*Dedicated to promoting the appreciation and joy of Koi, Goldfish & Water Gardens through education, mutual support and public exhibits in Jacksonville, Florida and the neighboring areas.*

Newsletter Editor  
1979 State Road 13  
Jacksonville, FL 32259

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