

Koi Joy – The Pleasures of Watergardening

Last month was part 1 of the summary of the year in review which we ended with items 10 thru 6 of the short article by Dr Eric Johnson called “The top 10 ways to empty your pond and make room for more fish”. This month we continue the count towards the number one way to empty your pond.

5. “Your main circulation pump cuts off in hot weather.” The loss of circulation can possibly cause a low dissolved oxygen level causing all fish to suffocate. We wrote about this happening to us last year. When we returned home that evening, we were fortunate enough to identify the problem and start oxygenating the water with spare pumps and aerators. We didn’t lose any fish but the result of that experience was we now have our main pump and aerators on different GFCI circuits to prevent this from happening.

4.” Treating the pond with a caustic medication that deprives them of much needed oxygen.” Avoid Formalin and products containing Alum, especially during warm weather. There are newer products available that will treat most everything that used to be treated with Formalin that pose less risk to the pond, but you still need to know the size of your pond in gallons to prevent an accidental overdose. Read the instructions completely before applying the medication and measure carefully before mixing. My husband has a reminder saying “I’ve cut this rope three times and it’s still too short”. I know, it doesn’t make sense to me either but it causes him to measure carefully, so whatever works.

3. “Introducing new fish to the pond without quarantining them”. Yep you guessed it, we did this too. You read about it a couple months ago where we had purchased some baby koi at the club show and keep them in the quarantine tank for 4 weeks then introduced them into the main pond. Re-read the column to determine the lesson we learned in this experience.

2. “The P.H. crashes and kills the whole pond.” Keep a P.H. meter or measuring kit on hand and use it. If needed buffer the P.H. with a commercial buffers, usually labeled something like PH-Up and PH-Down. Also baking soda is a natural buffer that enables your pond to handle swings in PH levels, but isn’t fast acting like the commercial buffers. Yes we have had this happen.

Drum roll please! And the number one way to cut your fish food cost to zero, “Ammonia poisoning”. Inadequate filtering, over crowing, and allowing debris to decay on the bottom are all contributing causes. To combat this, have aggressive circulation, filtering and aeration and scoop the leaves and other debris before they sink to the bottom and go unnoticed. And lastly don’t overstock; it leads to a multitude of problems. We all like getting new fish, but please evaluate your ponds capacity and take the appropriate action. Please email me with any questions. Dale@DWhaley.com