

Here we are at the end of a year and I'm contemplating what would be a fitting year end column. While reviewing the years articles, I realized a surprising number of them were outlined in an article I read a few years ago by Dr Eric Johnson titled "The top 10 ways to empty your pond". I emailed Eric and got permission to include it in this article. (I.E. Used with permission drjohnson.com)

10. "Leave the pond in the hands of an inexperienced sitter." We've all done this by asking a neighbor to visit your pond each day while you're on vacation. The enthusiastic neighbor, wanting to do a good job, over feeds. Pre-measuring the food in baggies relieves the neighbor of the pressure of knowing how much to feed. Plus leave a list of things to be checked each day.

9. "Jumping out of pond" Fish will sometimes jump out of a new home. There's nothing worse than spending hard earned money on a new fish only to find it dead the next morning. We've experienced this, so we always cover our pond when introducing new fish. Earlier this year we talked about predators and our personal predator protection system. It serves dual duty by also keeping new fish in the pond.

8. "Electrocution" A water pump or appliance shorts out with no ground fault interrupter in place to stop the voltage. Yep we did this one years ago and you read about it. Except we didn't electrocute the fish, we burnt down the pond. GFCI's are life saving.

7. "Pond springs a leak, drains completely and kills all your fish". Our second pond, which was actually a rebuild of the one we burnt down, sprang a leak one weekend we were out of town. It's handy to have an automatic refill in your pond. You can also install an alarm that will let you know when the water level falls to critical levels.

6. "Use the water hose to top off the pond with chlorinated water and forget its running" This kills all fish. Yes I'm guilty of this one and hear about others doing it all the time. I encourage everyone to set a timer when refilling the pond. Also keep plenty of de-chlorinator on hand.

I'm running out of space for this month's column so I'll save the top 5 for next month. During our 25 years of water gardening and Koi keeping we have experienced at least 6 out of the 10, but learned from each experience and devised methods and practices to prevent a reoccurrence. It is only through experience and education that you maintain a healthy pond, and if you don't get the education you will get the experience. Garden clubs and Koi clubs are great places to get the education. If you have any questions please email me at [Dale@DWhaley.com](mailto:Dale@DWhaley.com).

We wish you a very happy and prosperous new year. Don and Dale