



Splash

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 6 June, 2013

May Presentation

A video tour of the koi breeding area of Niigata by Peter Waddington. Peter is a pioneer for the koi hobby in the World outside of Japan. He has designed and built large koi ponds all over the World and developed many of staples of the hobby including bottom drains, Japanese mat and vortex filters.

In the 40+ years since he started visiting Japan in the mid '70's Peter has spent over seven years in Japan and bought and sold prize koi worth millions.

The tour which he recorded in 2003-04 predates the devastating earthquake that hit the region in 2007. This video allows us to enjoy this wonderful area before it was transformed by this tragic event.



Mushigame Musing







Mushigame in Spring and Winter

Visit our Web Site at: www.sckoi.com

Club Meetings:

The club meets on the third Tuesday of each month except July (Third Thursday) and December (No Meeting) in the Willow Glen Public Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave, San Jose, CA 95125. Check the web site Calendar for updates and a map. At our meetings we get acquainted with any guests, address any pond issues from guests or members. We generally follow this with a presentation which is usually related to pond or water gardening. Finally, we enjoy refreshments and open discussion.

June 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 June Meeting	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Meeting (a. Work day)						30 ARCA Annual

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Frank Mullaney
Rita Hughes
Sanjiv Kapoor

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AKCA Representative	Don Chamberlain	(408) 594-4161	scvkwg@gmail.com

Membership

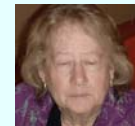
Club dues are \$30.00 per year. Our fiscal year starts July 1, so if you join before that date, your dues for the remainder of the current year will be prorated at the rate of \$2.50 per month.

To join, send your name, address, phone number and email address along with your check for dues to:

SCVKWG
PO Box 9006
San Jose, CA 95157

Or better yet, come to a meeting and give your information and check to Julaine.

Treasurer's Report



Check Book	
Beginning Balance 5/1/13:	\$9,014.08
Deposits:	
Outstanding Checks:	
Expenses:	(\$379.93)
Ending Balance 6/1/13:	\$8,634.15
CD	
Balance 2/5/13:	\$12,901.22

May Director's Meeting

Attendees: Cal Hansen, Don Chamberlain, Frank Mullaney, Julaine Mullaney, Nick Holquin and Sanjiv Kapoor.

Pond Tour

The primary topic of discussion was the pond tour. Unfortunately Dave Shelley was not in attendance as he had another engagement so the tour status remained up in the air.

Frank was able to get in contact with Dave the following day and confirmed that we had secured six ponds so preparation for the tour is kicking into high gear.

Sanjiv has offered to prepare schematics of the ponds. Don and Frank are available to assist Dave in obtaining photos and interviewing pond owners.

We plan to try new approaches to promoting the tour including an article in the Metro, radio ads, Craig's List and possibly an ad in Sunset magazine.

Club Inventory

We also reviewed the inventory of the items the club has in storage. Many of these items are obsolete or are from an era when the club held koi shows.

A number of items have been identified for disposal. A list will be prepared and the items will be offered to the membership first. After that we'll try an ad on Craig's List or yard sale to see if we can free up some storage space.

Dan's Membership

Due to some dropped communications the Board thought that Dan Rutledge was no longer a member, having moved on to a new club, the Monterey Bay Koi

and Pond Club. I surprised the heck out of Dan when an article in the April Splash referred to him as a "former" member.

Fortunately, I was able to meet with Dan at the recent Koi Show and we're all straightened out now. Sorry for the mistake Dan. We want you to know we appreciate your long and faithful service and all you've done and continue to do for the club.

Splash Publication

To simplify the logistics of preparing the Splash we decided to turn over that responsibility to Don with this issue. Please let us know how you like the new format and if you have any suggestions for future content.

May Meeting Presentation

We decided to present Peter Waddington's DVD "The Road to Yamakoshi, The Highways and Byways" from his book "Koi2Kichi" at the May meeting.

May Meeting

We had a better than average turn out at our meeting Tuesday, 5/21. There were 25 in attendance.

Guests and New Members

We had several guests including Mike Robinson and Jack and Linda Christiansen. Also visiting was Dr. Jessie Sanders.

Dr. Sanders is a veterinarian that has recently moved to the area, specializing in fish care. I'm sure we'll hear a lot more from her at future presentations.

If you're having a problem with one of your fish, get in touch with her at <http://AVSNCA.com>.

Pond Problems

As usual we opened with our guests introducing themselves and raising any pond issues they might be experiencing. One of the attendees has a small leak and was wondering what the best way to locate it was.

Sanjiv recommended that he contact Ben Dorsey of Ben There Pool Repair. Ben's number is: 408-355-5166. Ben has diving gear if required and specializes in finding and fixing leaks.

I checked Yelp and he's five stars all the way. Sounds like a good name to know.

Frank announced that after cleaning out his pond he had iris and water lilies to give away at the end of the meeting. We then moved on to club business.

Club Business

We expect to have our pond tour guide advertising prices available by Friday and request that all members contact their favorite businesses to sell an ad or two. The ads help defray the cost of producing a high quality pond guide.

Noreen requested new date stickies for the tour sign she has on her van. Alan Merrifield mentioned a possible speaker. David Newcomer recently spoke about his book, "Public Japanese Gardens in the USA: Present and Past Northern California" at the Mountain View Library. Alan attended and felt this topic might be of interest to the group.

Rita pointed out that we need to update the vendor list that we make available at the pond tour. Don and Cal will work on that.

Frank has produced a quantity of flyers for the tour and requested members to take them and distribute to their favorite businesses. Frank announced the Koi Person of the Month for April. It is Eduardo Massa. Eduardo has been distributing the hardcopy Splash now for some time.

Congratulations, Eduardo!! Job well done.

Presentation

With our business out of the way we immediately started the presentation. This month we watched a video tour of several the small hamlets outside of Nagaoka, Niigata, where most of the famous Japanese breeders are located.

We watched with lots of Oh's and Aw's as enormous and beautiful nishkigoi were displayed and lovely scenery passed by.

Desert

After the presentation, the meeting was adjourned for open discussion and chance to sample the delicious cupcakes provided by Alan and Linda Merrifield. Discussion and cupcakes were attacked with vigor.



Alan and Linda Hard at Work on Refreshments



For All of Those That Came Before

A few days ago I received an email from Lynne looking for a pond builder that she had met on the Pond Tour last year. I'd never heard of the fellow so I forwarded her inquiry to our mailing list in hopes that someone out there knew the person she was looking for and would help her out.

And of course that's exactly what happened. By the next day she had her information and sent me a lovely thank you praising our club to the heavens.

I thanked her for that and asked if I could publish her remarks. She replied with even more praise.

Over the years a number of club volunteers have commented how discouraging it is to work so hard for the club and nobody seems to care. It's normal I guess. We expect our products to produce, our services to serve and our koi club to club koi.

Wait! That didn't come out right, but I think you know what I mean. Words of praise or encouragement are often hard to come by, while criticism is available at the slightest difference of opinion, regardless of how slight.

And so, I'm publishing Lynne's remarks. Not to pat myself on the back, but to let all the guys and gals that have worked for so many years to keep our club going know that their efforts are paying off.

"A-MAZING!!!

What a great network of koi pond enthusiasts you have!! I am literally stunned at the quick responses! I had no idea it would be so easy!

I had spent quite some time searching the Internet and even joined Facebook for a few minutes and had no luck finding him!

I visited Zack's house last on the tour, since he lives closest to San Carlos where I live. That turned out to be a mistake because that house was the one I most identified with: a truly natural setting. (And what a bonus: 2 completely different ponds that were equally fabulous in their own way.) I would have liked to have spent more time there. Zack was very generous answering all the questions I had at the gorgeous small pond. And Jonathan (who had run out of business cards by the end of the day) really seemed to know what he was doing in refurbishing a pond from

all the questions I asked him. I've talked to MANY pond owners/builders over the years on the SC koi pond tours, and Zack and Jonathan really hit it out of the park in all ways!

Thank you SO much for Jonathan's info and I look forward to the next tour!

Lynne"

And then I asked if I could print her email. She replied:

"Absolutely! Feel free to edit it how you like. I have been enjoying the tours for I think the last 5 years? A co-worker happened to cut out your newspaper ad and thought I'd be interested. LOVE the tours! Because I live so far north and July is a hot month, I start with the most southern house first and work my way north, so that I am in a cooler region at the hottest part of the day. I had such a wonderful time last year. There was one house, maybe San Jose, where I got talking to the owner about plants and I volunteered to walk around his entire backyard and list the Latin names of all his plants if he had a notepad. Well, he was extremely excited! I also wrote down hints of what some of the plants needed (I believe one had a tie that would soon choke and kill it).

Personally I lean more towards a natural setting for ponds and koi. I also feel that fish enjoy themselves more in natural settings (swimming around things, nibbling on plant roots and rocks, etc., but I keep that to myself around owners who just have deep black ponds with huge stunning koi and nothing else in the pond.

I am on my second pond remodel. 1st had a large island in the center (that took up too much room) and the pond, while deeper than 2.5' was still too shallow for the lower hills of San Carlos, and predators cleaned me out after about 2 years. The Aquascape plan worked very well and my water was always very clear. Just need to go deeper like the Koi Pond tour people. So I've learned a lot from them. And it is like a mini vacation touring the more lovely of back yards. Everyone (owners and builders) have ALWAYS been so friendly and willing to answer any questions. I especially love before and after photos and those that list costs are extremely helpful! And I appreciate the shade and cold beverages (and sometimes snacks) that the owners provide!

Also, the cute koi flags in front of each home is VERY helpful in spotting the houses.

Thank you for providing a WONDERFUL and educational service with your tours. VERY much appreciated.

Thanks,

Lynne”

So I hope these words of encouragement bring some happiness to all of the volunteers that have spent so many hours making our events happen and just keeping the club alive.

I hope it will inspire current members to think how much Lynne and others like her enjoy our Pond Tours and respond favorably when contacted by Rita to help with this year’s Pond Tour, and thank you Lynne for letting us know how much our club has meant to you over the years.

The President’s Corner

by Frank Mullaney

Though I have been the President of a gem & mineral society I have not worked very much with the Koi club, so it was with some hesitation that I agreed to take on the position of President. But I knew that if the organization wanted to survive something needed to be done. As I had opened my mouth and voiced my opinion I felt I needed to back up my mouth with action.

I am pleased the direction the club is going. It seems to me that we are picking up 1 to 2 people each month. The speakers have been great.

The next hurdle the club has is the Pond Tour. This is going to require **ALL HANDS ON DECK**. A list of the ponds and hours will be published shortly.

If you have an Idea please convey it to one of the board members. We don't have all the answers and we need you help!



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KOI USA is a great magazine with lots of great articles and pictures. Your subscription supports the AKCA which in turn supports our club.



Some Help From Friends

A month or two ago I was contacted by Lew Hileman who puts out the San Diego Koi Club newsletter suggesting that koi club newsletter editors get together once in awhile to exchange ideas. I agreed this would be a great idea and complimented him on the job he's doing with the San Diego newsletter.

In reply he offered me the use of articles from their paper if I was interested and if the author's agreed. Well I was definitely interested and Lew was able to get permission, so here is the first installment of a series I found interesting. It covers a subject all koi keepers should be aware of. I hope you find it interesting too.

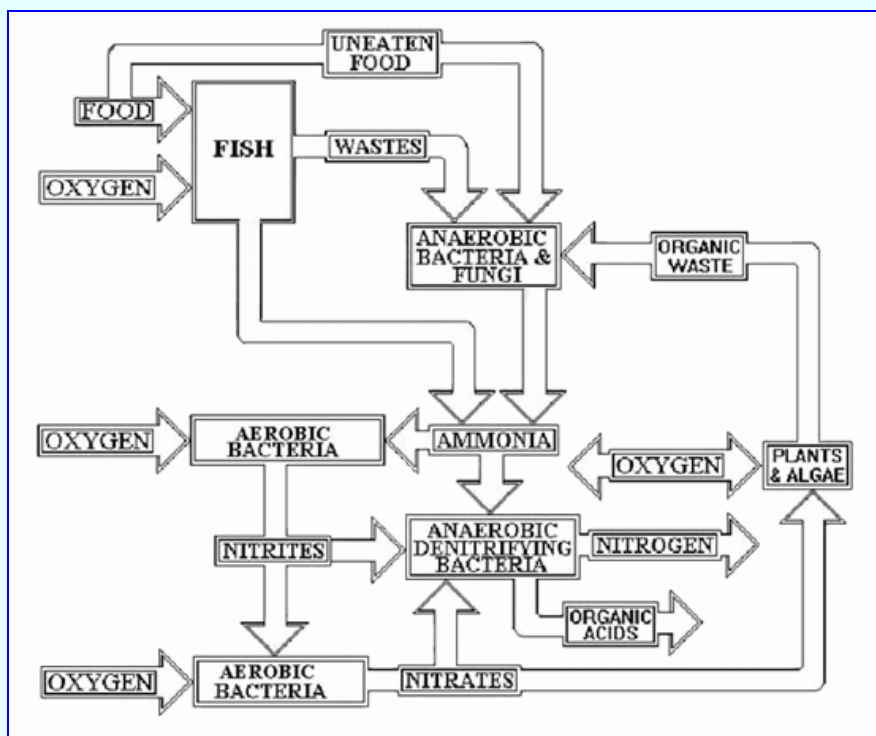
Pond Water Chemistry

Norm Meck
Koi Club of San Diego

This is the first of a series of articles dealing with the chemical makeup of pond water. How to measure what is in it, what is good, what is bad, and what to do about it. Before starting, I would like to discuss the name applied to what has typically been called the "bio-filter." A filter is defined as a porous device through which water (or gas) is passed to separate out matter in suspension. The biologic activity within the pond "filter" does not trap the matter in suspension but acts on dissolved components that could not be separated regardless of how fine the filter pores. Although this device may perform a dual role as a mechanical filter, to emphasize the processes of interest, you will see that I will refer to it as the biologic converter or bio-converter, not as a filter.

Do not confuse the terms water quality and water clarity. Crystal clear water can contain compounds that are deadly to your fish. Green water, caused by excessive phyto plankton growth can actually be beneficial to the fish although not very beneficial to the pond keeper who can't see them. Water clarity can give some indications as to mechanical filtration effectiveness but the single cell algae that makes up the green water are so small that they cannot be effectively filtered out.

A pond with a biologic converter and filled with Koi is a rather complex, somewhat self-contained ecological system.



Each component of this system requires the other components to survive and prosper. Ammonia is generated as a by product of the fishes' metabolic processes and is transferred to the water from the gills. To a lesser degree, other fish waste and other organic waste is converted by bacteria and fungi to ammonia compounds. These compounds can be injurious to the fish, but a healthy biologic converter populated with nitrification bacteria consume these ammonia compounds and convert them to nitrite. Unfortunately, nitrite is just as toxic to the fish as the ammonia. Again, the biologic converter comes into play with a population of another type of nitrification bacteria that convert the nitrite to nitrate. The nitrate is basically inert to the fish but usable by plants and algae within the pond. As the plants and algae grow and the Koi eat them, the cycle starts all over again. These nitrification bacteria are called aerobic since they require oxygen to convert their "food" to energy just like the fish. It was thought for years that these bacteria were Nitrosomonas and Nitrobacter but it has recently been determined that they are different types. This isn't a big deal as there are two different types, just not by those names.

By introducing fish into your pond, you have assumed the responsibility for the care of these creatures. This includes not only feeding them but also providing them with a healthy environment in which they can live and thrive. Partial determination of the quality of this liquid environment can be made through chemical measurements. It seems somewhat ludicrous that someone would spend hundreds or thousands of dollars to build a pond and then add hundreds or thousands of dollars of beautiful Koi but would not buy and learn how to use a ten dollar nitrite test kit. This doesn't mean that one must test the water every few minutes or even every few days. An established pond with the fish appearing healthy should be checked every month or so. It is only when something out of the ordinary is observed and possibly during seasonal changes when an additional test or two might be needed. A simple test at the right time may prevent a small problem from becoming a catastrophe. When starting up a new pond or bio-converter system, daily tests may be required until the converter comes on line, then weekly for a couple of months until the system has stabilized.

Test Kits in Estimated Order of Importance (Required)

1. pH
 2. Ammonia
 3. Nitrite
 4. Thermometer
- (Nice To Have)
5. Alkalinity
 6. Salinity
 7. Nitrate
 8. Dissolved Oxygen

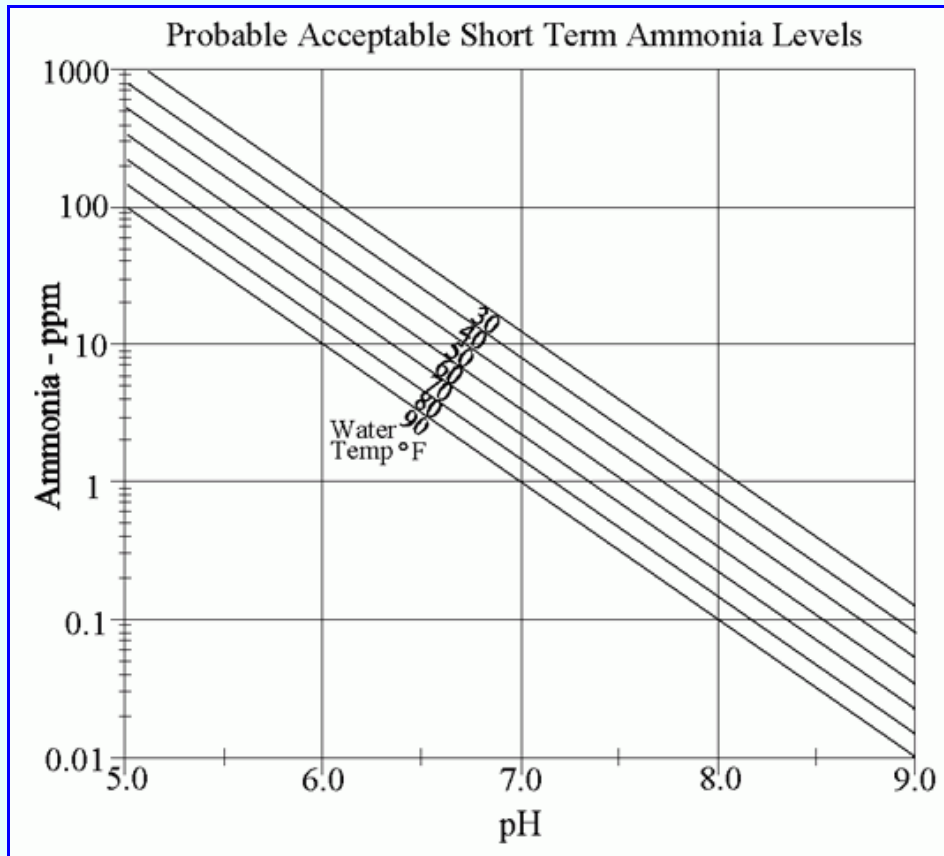
(Probably Not Necessary)

9. Chlorine
- 10 Hardness

Just as when medicinally treating your pond, it is imperative to know the total amount of water in your pond and converter/filter system as accurately as possible. Over treatment or under treatment with chemicals can be equally disastrous. Don't guess about quantities, measure them!

AMMONIA

Ammonia, NH_3 , measured in parts per million (ppm), is the first measurement to determine the "health" of the biologic converter. Ammonia should not be detectable in a pond with a "healthy" bio converter. The ideal and normal measurement of ammonia is zero. When ammonia is dissolved in water, it is partially ionized depending upon the pH and temperature. The ionized ammonia is called ammonium and is not particularly toxic to the fish. As the pH and the temperature increase, the ionization and ammonium decrease which increases the toxicity. As a general guideline for a water temperature of 70°F, most Koi would be expected to exhibit at least a short term tolerance to an ammonia level of 1 ppm if the pH was 7.0, or even as high as 10.0 if the pH was 6.0. At a pH of 8.0, just 0.1 ppm can be dangerous. More about this later when we discuss pH.



Two types of ammonia test kits are commonly available. The first is based on the Nessler reagent. This kit normally uses drops in a water sample with an associated color chart. The second is a salicylate reagent test that may use drops, powders, or pills and is usually a two step process, again followed by a color chart. The Nessler kit provides a faster test but is not compatible with any ammonia treatment chemicals that may be in the water (more about those later). One way to determine which type of test kit you have is that the Nessler kit color chart normally ranges from clear, meaning no ammonia, to yellow/yellowish orange as ammonia levels increase. The salicylate based test kit ranges from a light yellow, meaning no ammonia, to green/bluish green as ammonia levels increase. Both types read the total of ammonia and ammonium, so without knowing the temperature and pH, the toxicity cannot be determined. Suffice it to say that the only good ammonia reading is zero. But note that any pond containing fish will have some residual ammonia. The bio converter does not remove all of it each pass and the fish continuously add it to the pond. The residual level will be determined by the fish load, the effectiveness of the bio converter, and how often the water is passed through it. This residual level should not be detectable on the average test kit. The recommended test kit should be able to detect 0.1 ppm to 1.0 ppm of ammonia. An ammonia test kit is considered to be a requirement for all pond keepers.

Effects:

Ammonia tends to block oxygen transfer from the gills to the blood and can cause both immediate and long-term gill damage. The mucous producing membranes can be destroyed, reducing both the external slime coat and damaging the internal intestinal surfaces. Fish suffering from ammonia poisoning usually appear sluggish, often at the surface as if gasping for air.

Source:

Ammonia is a gas primarily released from the fish gills as a metabolic waste from protein breakdown, with some lesser secondary sources such as bacterial action on solid wastes and urea.

Control:

Ammonia is removed by bacterial action in the bio-converter and a small amount is directly assimilated by the plants and algae in the pond. The first family of nitrification bacteria consume the ammonia and produce nitrite as a waste product. A significant portion of this bacterial action can occur on the walls of the pond as well as in the bio-converter. Ammonia readings may increase with a sudden increase in bio-converter load until the bacterial colony grows to accept the added material. This can happen following the addition of a large number of new fish to a pond or during the spring as the water temperature increases. Fish activity can often increase faster following a temperature increase than the bacterial action does. A bio-converter that becomes partially obstructed with waste and/or develops channels through the media may operate at a reduced effectiveness that can also cause the ammonia levels to increase.

Treatment:

Chemical treatments to counteract ammonia toxicity are available commercially under various trade names. These treatments, most of which are based on formaldehyde, chemically change the form of the ammonia into compounds that are not harmful to the fish. They do not actually remove it from the pond. The bio-converter does the actual removal. Although most of these products use a dosage of 50 ml per 100 gallons to chemically bind up to 1 ppm of ammonia, be sure and check the manufacturer's directions before use. Note that the Nessler type test kits may show false readings when any of these chemical treatments are in the water. If a pond has a healthy bio-converter, there is not only no need to treat with ammonia binding chemical agents, it is better not to use them at all.

When ammonia is detected (assuming a pH of about 7.5):

1. Increase aeration to maximum. Add supplemental air if possible.
2. Stop feeding the fish if detected in an established pond; reduce amount fed by half if starting up a new bio-converter/pond.
3. Check an established pond bio-converter for probable clean out requirement.
4. For an ammonia level of 0.1 ppm, conduct a 10% water change out. For a level of 1.0 ppm, conduct a 25% change out. CAUTION: If the tap water has a higher pH than that of the pond, adding the replacement water may make the situation worse.
5. Chemically treat for twice the amount of ammonia measured.
6. Consider transferring fish if the ammonia level reaches 2.5 ppm.
7. If starting up a new bio-converter/pond, discontinue use of any UV Sterilizers, Ozone Generators, and Foam Fractionators (Protein Skimmers).
8. Retest in 12 to 24 hours.
9. Under Emergency conditions only, consider chemically lowering the pH one-half unit (but not below 6.0).

Next time we will look at Nitrite and Nitrate, the remaining two steps of the nitrification process.

A Brief History of Koi

The Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is thought to have evolved about 2 million years ago in the area of the Black and Caspian sea. They are distinguished by two pairs of barbels on the upper lip.



Related species include a number of other carp and goldfish. From the Black Sea carp spread throughout the Danube river basin and quickly became an important and desirable food source.

From this region carp were spread throughout Europe and Asia. By 2,000 BC carp were established in China. The Germans bred a strain of carp with few scales, making it easier to prepare for dinner.

German immigrants brought carp to the US in the 1800's as a source of favorite food. Like many introductions of foreign species. This didn't work out that well. Most Americans are not that fond of eating carp and by the late 1800's they had spread throughout the country, driving out native species.

About 1500 BC carp (koi) arrived in Japan from China. Rice farmers in northern Japan raised magoi in their irrigation ponds for food. During the cold winters they kept their brood stock in small ponds inside their homes. In the early 1800's some farmers began keeping natural mutations that produced koi with red markings which they naturally called higo and cross breeding them to reinforce this characteristic.

By cross breeding various mutations the various varieties of nishikigoi were developed.

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