



# Splash

*Santa Clara Valley Koi and Water Garden Club – Vol. 40, No. 10, October 2024*

## Autumn Arrives

Next meeting Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. This is the club's last general meeting of the year per our schedule. Join us for an entertaining time with the club's members.

Our next activity will be our annual holiday social tentatively scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup>. More details to come as available. We also plan a silent auction fundraiser so if you have any donations, please get in touch with our social chairperson.



Another fun holiday event we have is a holiday-themed pond / waterfeature photo contest – winning photo featured in our December newsletter. Prize awarded. Enter your Holiday themed pond photo soon for your chance to win. Members only please.

## Upcoming Events

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Oct 15 | General Meeting, 7:30 PM via Zoom   |
| Dec 8  | Annual Holiday Social and Fundraiser – Donations request for silent auction     |
| Jan 21 | General Meeting, 7:30 PM via Zoom – Annual Business / Officer 2025 Installation |

**Visit us on the web at: [www.sckoi.com](http://www.sckoi.com)**

Started in 1984, we are a non-profit organization that provides a community for koi keepers and water gardeners that fosters greater understanding and appreciation for these fine hobbies. Through our publications, pond tours, and meetings, we educate, support and share knowledge in a friendly, sociable environment. We assist with fish rescue, care, and development of aquatic animals and plants and are a resource to our community for these areas of interest. We have monthly meetings with interesting speakers and topics. Visit our website for the latest information about events and activities at [www.sckoi.com](http://www.sckoi.com).

## Presidents Corner

Hello everyone,

October's general meeting will be held Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM via Zoom. SCVKWGC provides regular meetings, events, and support for our membership and community year round since 1984! Hope you can join us.



As a reminder, there is no general meeting in November. Some requests from members to host more socials and meet ups have been made. Your board continues to keep club business moving forward. If you would like to host a meet up or event, please let me know. The membership enjoys opportunities to get together for outings, especially during the holiday season.

Save the date. Holiday social planned for Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. We are currently seeking a venue and will follow up once we have more information. If you would like to help out with the holiday social let me know. We always can use extra help, our group is fun, and we like to have a nice party for the membership to celebrate our season. There will be a silent auction fundraiser.

As always, if you have any questions about Koi, ponds, or water gardening we are available to help. Email [info@sckoi.com](mailto:info@sckoi.com) or attend one of our meetings

*Happy Koi Keeping,*  
Eve Bretzke

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## Did you know?

**Kohaku is the first variety of koi that has two colors.**

Kohaku is one of the most popular breeds of Koi fish in Japan. It is also one of the most common koi seen in aquariums or ponds. They are known for their white body and red marking, traditionally called *hi*.



**Karasu is one of the older types of koi fish.**

Karasu, which means “crow” in Japanese, has a black body and may either have a white or orange belly. It is one of the older types of Koi fish and believed to bring good luck to the pond.

**Koi fish are very sociable.**

Koi is a social fish. They enjoy living in groups or pairs. They are also friendly and do not eat or fight with other species of fish when placed in one aquarium. Koi, just like other pets, would sometimes come out to the surface if it's feeding time or to seek a touch or pat on their head from their owners.



# Common Koi Coloration Terms

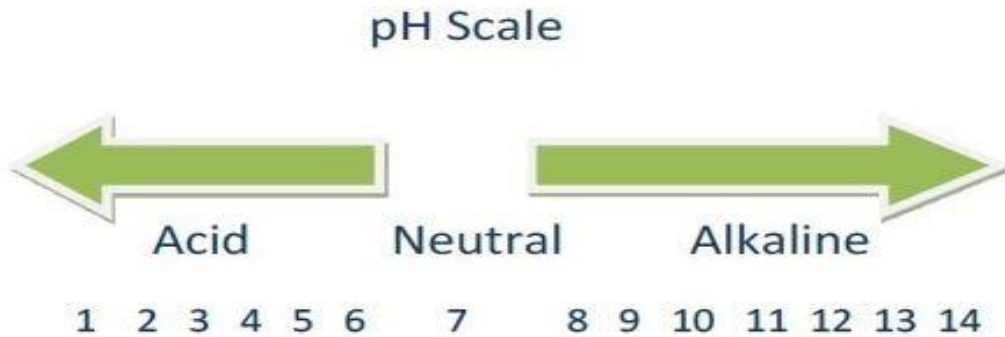


Term	Meaning
Aka	Red base
Beni	Dark red/orange-red
Hi	Red
Ki	Yellow
Gin	Metallic silver
Kin	Metallic gold
Orenji	Orange
Ogon	Solid metallic
Shiro	White
Sumi	Black
Muji	Solid, uniform

## Be Aware of the Deadly pH crash

*How to prevent it from happening in your pond*

The scientific definition of pH is “the negative logarithm of the hydrogen ion (H<sup>+</sup>) concentration.” This is where the H in pH comes from. The lowercase letter “p” refers to “power” or exponent. As minerals dissolve in water the equilibrium shifts. An increase in the amount of hydrogen ions makes water more acidic, while a decrease makes it more alkaline.



pH scale consists of numbers from 0 through 14, with 7 being Neutral, that is used to indicate the acidity of a waterbody. The pH is often misunderstood. A pH of 7.0 may be perfect, according to many, but it may be unsuitable for fish if there is a lack of calcium or buffering capacity. pH should be seen in context with all the constituents of a water sample. It is not so much the pH itself that is crucial, but the ionic content giving rise to the pH. It is only at the extremes that pH is a true indicator of real trouble. At low pHs the toxicity of ammonia is low. Low pHs may be brought about by carbon dioxide, produced by animals and by plants at night, dissolving in water and forming carbonic acid.

If water of a higher pH is added then there may be a sudden increase in pH. Associated with this rise will be a rapid increase in the toxicity of any ammonia present.

## **pH Crash: Acidosis**

Water is constantly rushing (leaking) into the fish through their skin and gills. The kidney is responsible for pushing that water out. Water with a low pH scale is getting into the fish, and this requires that the body mobilize its own natural buffers to sustain the blood pH. Quickly, these buffers are exhausted and the blood stream suffers a low pH called acidosis. Acidosis can be terminal for Koi or Pond fish

If you notice your fish look like they have a white haze on their skin or that their skin is peeling...Test for pH and do an immediate 50% water change before going any further. Think of pH as the way the water feels against the fish's skin. A low pH "burns" the skin because it is acidic. High pH "chaps" the skin because it is alkaline. The ideal pH for Koi and goldfish is around 7.5 but these fish can tolerate a range between 6.8 - 8.2.

We prefer to use pH strips to test pond water because not only does it give you the pH level it also indicates whether the water is buffered properly or not. Buffered water means the pH is stable. pH tests vary a few points at different times of the day. It tends to run higher at night then lower by morning, taking it's cue from the natural CO<sub>2</sub> and Oxygen exchange of the plants in the water. The difference in the pH at different times of the day is called pH swing. When it is more than just a couple of points off it can be dangerous and unpredictable. The object is to stabilize the pH at an acceptable level.

Now think of the pH suddenly falling. It would feel sort of like being dropped into a vat of acid. When the pH suddenly falls to a 6.5 or below it is called a pH crash and is very deadly. Fish subjected to a mild pH crash suffer peeling of the skin, very similar to our sun-burned skin peeling off. More signs your Koi are suffering from a pH crash are: the fish will lose their appetites, lie on the bottom of the pond and show signs of red streaking in the fins and body.

### **Sever crashes can end with complete fish loss**

A drop in pH in a pond to below 7 will lead to sudden changes in your Koi's Health. The longer the pond's pH stays in this range the worse your Koi's health will be. Colors in your Koi are likely to fade through the deposition of excess mucus while in extreme cases, Koi may even start to grasp at the surface of the pond. Acidic pond water is also likely to be destructive to plastic and metal surfaces in turn this will cause the pond water to become more toxic. In the case of an emergency a water change is in order to take the pH up quickly. A very clean system with little organics tends to be lower in pH. Bead filters, because of their efficiency, can actually contribute to low pH readings. For readings that tend to stay low, baking soda in small quantities can be used to bring the pH up but you do not want to raise the pH quickly unless it's an emergency because it can shock the fish. Instead, it is best to use carefully prescribed products designed to raise the pH over a period of time and hold it at the desired level. We use pH stabilizers with great results. It's important to know that the stabilizers must be added back whenever water changes are made.

Concrete leaching into the water will cause high pH readings. Newer ponds where stones have been concreted together in a stream or waterfall often see readings close to 10.0. Again, care must be given to bring it down slowly. Once it is down you will then stabilize it with pH stabilizers. Aquariums and ponds are not immune to pH swings and crashes. It's a great idea to test in the morning and in the evening for a week to get an idea of the severity of any swings in the readings. Increasing the pH is usually as simple as adding common baking soda slowly to the water.

*Source: Koi Pond Guide.com*

The pH scale is logarithmic. This means that there is a x10 change in acidity or alkalinity for each change of 1 unit in pH.

Thus pH5 is 10x more acid than pH6, And pH5 is 100x more acid than pH7.

## Plant of the Month - *Acorus gramineus* 'Variegatus'



Grassy-leaved sweet flag is easily grown in average, medium to wet soils in full sun to part shade. Plants perform well in both boggy conditions (including shallow standing water to 3-4" deep) and consistently moist garden soils. Never allow soils to dry out. Scorched leaf tips and withering leaves are often the first signs of drying soils. In water gardens, plants are typically planted in containers with water covering the crowns or in wet soils at the water's edge. Plants appreciate some relief from hot summer sun (e.g., afternoon shade or filtered sun) when grown in hot summer climates. Plants will slowly naturalize by spreading rhizomes, but are not considered to be invasive. If grown in containers sunk below

the water surface, plants will not spread. Plants are not considered to be reliably winter hardy.

Source: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=v210>

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## IWGS Members Benefits for Club Members



The IWGS international fellowship of water gardeners includes new water gardeners keen to learn, experienced water gardeners eager to share, commercial growers, hybridizers, botanical garden and university professionals, hobbyists with wide ranging experience, aquatic plant specialists, fish specialists, manufacturers of water garden products, installers and retailers, and others who appreciate the delights of water in the landscape.

The IWGS database currently comprises over 3,000 plant names, and more than 1,000 photographs, continues to grow, with new varieties being added constantly. IWGS documents and shares knowledge of waterlilies, lotuses and other aquatic plants. They have just released their Fall issue. Email [info@sckoi.com](mailto:info@sckoi.com) if interested.

Visit [www.iwgs.org](http://www.iwgs.org) for more information and images of waterlilies and water gardening.

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## 2024 Club Business

*Happy 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! Can you believe we have been meeting for over 40 years and talking about Koi ponds and water gardens? Crazy... "Koi Kitchi" ... we just love our hobby.*

What a fun summer season of socials we have had. What a nice group of people we have in our membership. We have enjoyed gathering with one another sharing our love of Koi, the ponds, the garden, and nature. We continue to encourage the membership to help with club activities ... if you have time and are able reach out. In the meantime, we will continue to hold meetings and events per our club schedule. We appreciate our board members and are glad that the club is stable and happy. We look ahead to 2025. There are openings for board positions for the upcoming year.

## Our Sponsors

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### Sponsorships Available:

Rates include advertisement in the monthly club newsletter The SPLASH, on club website, plus other publications that the club may produce for one year. Current advertising term runs July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. To begin or renew an existing sponsorship contact our newsletter editor at [info@sckoi.com](mailto:info@sckoi.com).

**Business card size**                 **\$45 per year**  
**Quarter page size**               **\$95 per year**