

V. Top 19 Frequently Asked Questions by Dr. Erik Johnson, Ashland VA Aug 10-11 2003

- Half of the questions are about a fish symptom.
- The other half occur through several categories.
- Hundreds of questions are asked every day.

#20 Does ___ Kill Frogs and Snails?

- Dimilin does not.
- Formalin kills snails and tadpoles, not frogs.
- Potassium kills snails, some tadpoles, not frogs.
- Salt can kill some snails, others survive. Tadpoles and frogs survive.
- Production of noxious gases like hydrogen sulfide and methane.

#19 How Can You Tell Boy From Girl Koi?

- Males have breeding tubercles on their gill covers and pectoral fins in springtime, even in pre-mature males.
- Females are perfectly smooth on the pecs.
- Females are rounder in conformation viewed from the top. Males are streamlined even when heavily fed.

#18 How Do You Measure Salt Levels?

- There are three ways. You can drill out a SeaTest hydrometer. It's hard.
- You can run a salt level test, they're cheap and effective and accurate.
- You can use an electronic salinity meter. Easiest.

#17 What Kind of Pump Should I Use?

- Submersible pumps are easy to install.

#16 What Should I Do About Herons?

- Heron decoys usually don't work and may attract other herons.
- Gator head works.
- Scarecrow works.
- Netting works well.
- Trip lines don't work.

#15 Do Frogs and Birds Carry Fish Parasites?

- No, it's the LEAST likely mode of transmission.
- Can it happen? Yes.
- Does it happen, rarely.
- Parasite must resist drying or be abundant to be carried in water droplet.
- NOT in stools or urine.

#14 Can Koi and Goldfish Breed?

- Heck yeah.
- But goldfish will not allow any Koi fry to live.
- Koi WILL allow goldfish eggs and fry to survive.

- What kind of babies do you end up with in Koi x goldfish polyculture? Just goldfish.

#13 Why Didn't Bug-b-gone Work?

- Usually, it's because it may be a poor dose, or not strong enough.
- Just as often, the person is treating a crashed ph (untested) with parasite remedy.
- Sometimes the medicine is defeated by UV, carbon, filtration, organics.

#12 My Goldfish and Koi Are Chasing Each Other

- Usually they are spawning.
- If water quality is good, the fish will heal.
- If it's not they will ulcerate.
- If the female is outnumbered, she could die.
- Pond should not have sharp rocks at edge!

#11 Red Worms in the Filter!

- Tubifex or bloodworms.
- Carry no pathogens for Koi.
- Carry myxobolus for salmonids!
- Eaten on sight, which is why they only exist in filter.
- What if we applied copper?

#10 Food & Storage, What's Right?

- Best food has fish or shrimp meal as first ingredient
- Less corn and less plant protein is better.
- Avoid ingredient splitting.
- Look for stabilized vitamin C
- Refrigerate, do NOT freeze the food.

#9 What's the Best Way to Prepare for Winter?

- Make sure the waterfall is off at night and when temps are dropping
- Never put fish to "bed" with leaves and solids on pond bottom
- Salt at end of year.
- Do not disturb bottom-most level of water
- Keep a hole in the ice with a cattle trough heater.
- Feed Cheerios and wheat germ in the Fall for fish and filter.

#8 Should I Do Water Changes in My Pond?

- Common question
- Topping off is not a water change
- 20% every two weeks.
- 75% every 2-3 months
- Always dechlorinate

#7 Should I run a UV and pump all Year?

- Run the pump all year. In winter, be careful about the bottom limnion and supercooling.
- Run the UV as needed to control algae.

- UV kills “good” microorganisms in water too, including bacteriophages.

- Spare the bulb and run it in the Spring.

#6 How many fish can I keep in my pond?

- There are lots of numbers
- I like: “One inch of fish per ten gallons of water.”
- One inch of fish per square foot of surface area if you have little or no filtration.

#5 Is String Algae bad? Solutions?

- String algae is good.
- All algae is good
- Consumes O₂ at night
- String algae kills pumps and flows
- Control with ONE Plecostomus

#4 What can I do about green water?

- Major water change to eliminate nitrates
- Shade the pond
- Reduce feedings
- Deploy a veggie filter
- Employ a UV sterilizer.

#3 My Ph Is High. How Can I Bring It Down?

- Don't.
- Unless Ammonia is “up” then be cautious about having it higher than neutral.

#2 My Fish is Sick, What's Wrong with It?

- #1 All Time Most Common Question
- Useless, too.
- Need Checklist info.