ABSTRACT

A backyard pond stocked with beautiful Koi fish will create a parklike atmosphere that will make you the envy of your neighbors. How, before you pick up that shovel and start digging, read the information in this report to avoid mistakes that might make you regret building a pond in your backyard!

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HOW TO CREATE THE PERFECT BACKYARD POND

Plan First, Dig Later!
How to Create the Perfect Backyard Pond

INTRODUCTION

A backyard pond can turn your average backyard into a landscape masterpiece. As the variety of inexpensive kits increases, backyard ponds have become increasingly popular. The Koi fish hobby now ranks...
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as one of the most popular hobby in the world, second only to photography!

Backyard ponds were one a luxury for only for those who could afford them. However, with the current products available and with a little effort, building that beautiful pond is now affordable to most homeowners.

Unfortunately, in the rush to build backyard ponds, several do-it-yourselfers have made mistakes. Building a pond is not as simple as digging a hole and filling it with water. There are several important factors to take into account before and during the construction of your pond.

The following are some guidelines on how to build that perfect pond the smart way. These key points will help you avoid the most common mistakes.

**Plan First, Dig Later**

First, let your backyard decide. The first question that comes to mind is where to build the pond? Often, home owners just find an open spot in their backyard and immediately start digging. The result? Just your ordinary backyard with a pond. Home owners have to integrate the pond into their existing landscape. The pond will fail to compliment the overall design and feel of the property. In situations like these, the presence of a pond can actually diminish the beauty of a home landscape.
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Before lifting that first shovel full of dirt, take some time to pick out a design and suitable spot that will complement the overall design of the yard. Don’t just simply grab that shovel and dig on the first spot you find. Do a little research and if you feel that your own judgment and unique design is not enough, ask some friends or your family members to help you out. Or consider using a professional landscape engineer. Its better and cheaper to do it right the first time!

Second, consider your long term plans for your pond. If you are considering breeding fish, you may want to think about placing the pond in a less shaded area. Warmth is an important element in maintaining fish population. If the pond is placed near a tree, you may find yourself constantly cleaning leaves off the pond. The environment surrounding your backyard will have a great impact on the appearance and maintenance of your pond.

Size does matter. You need to make sure that the size of the pond will meet your long term goals. A smaller pond is certainly easier to build and maintain but it may not satisfy the need of the plants and fish you want to keep.

Building a backyard pond can definitely make it more attractive. It is a great way of making outdoor living more pleasant and enjoyable. However, if done poorly, your backyard pond may turn out to be a disaster!

10 CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU BUILD A KOI FISH POND
Before approaching the task of constructing a Koi Pond, ask yourself the following questions:

**ARE YOU PREPARED TO BUILD THE KOI POND YOURSELF OR GET AN EXPERT TO BUILD IT FOR YOU?**

There is no substitute for getting quality advice from a professional pond builder. After you have done your preliminary research and have started to gain some idea of what you want, you can really benefit from consulting with a professional.

They can discuss your ideas with you and help spell out what is doable and what is not; what is realistic and what is not; and finally, what is affordable and what is not! Following such a discussion, you will be in a far better position to decide whether you want to build yourself or hire a professional builder do the work for you.

**JUST HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD TO SPEND?**

This is the easiest but most critical question of all. Take a guess at what it "might" cost to build the Koi Pond you have in mind and then double it! Is this amount out of your reach? Well,
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guess what! This is exactly the "scary" question you ought to ask yourself!

Now, get yourself an expenses book and list out all predicted itemized expenses as you do your research. You will need to determine a budget for absolutely EVERYTHING before you even think about grabbing that spade! As you finalize your preliminary budget, ask yourself once more if this is affordable or way beyond your means.

If it is within range of what you expected, then you can look for ways to reduce spending if needed, along the way. For example, when it comes to stocking your completed pond, you may want to cut back by purchasing smaller or less mature Koi specimens as these are often less expensive. Likewise, you may be able to cut back on pond plant expenditure or ornamentation if necessary.

HOW MUCH ROOM DO YOU HAVE FOR A KOI POND?

Now this is almost as important as the "Money" question! You really need to consider not only the size of the pond that you "want" but what your backyard can "accommodate". Think in terms of what percentage of the yard would be needed for your ultimate pond - this can help put things in perspective. If your yard is big, then this normally won't be an issue, but, you do still need to think about the "location" within your yard. When considering how much space, think along the lines of "bigger is
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better" - meaning Koi can grow quite big and realistically require a lot of room to grow.

You may also be tempted to buy "one of every color" when it comes to stocking your pond, so there is a risk of over-crowding! Set yourself a limit on the quantity of Koi you will have long-term (either by purchasing more Koi later on or from breeding) and ensure that your pond size will be sufficient to accommodate them.

HOW MANY KOI FISH DO YOU WANT TO HAVE?

It's fairly well known that fish will only grow to a size that their environment can sustain. They will also grow faster where there is a smaller population of fish as a result of less competition for food and better water quality resulting from less waste.

It is less well known however, that the growth of Koi can be promoted better by an increase in water surface area. In other words, if you think about 2 ponds of equivalent volume, let's say 10,000 gallons (just about 38,000 litres) but different depths, the deeper pond will not promote growth as well as the other as a consequence of a smaller water surface area. Consider also, that a pond can support a corresponding total weight or "biomass" of fish.

For example, in a small pond, the biomass may support either 2 large fish or 20 smaller fish provided that the total weight is the
same in either situation, and provided that it does not exceed the final biomass for that pond. A general guideline when determining how many fish your pond will take is, about 50 to 100 gallons per small koi (under 12"), and 500 to 1000 gallons per large koi (over 24") in a properly filtered pond.

Some experts say that those new to the Koi hobby are advised to build a pond between 1,000 and 5,000 gallons, however, others advise that the ideal pond is more around the 10,000 gallon mark. Ultimately, your pond size will be influenced by cost, location and space, but aim for the biggest you can manage - it's very difficult to go back and make your pond larger afterward!

**HOW MUCH TIME ARE YOU HAPPY TO SPEND MAINTAINING YOUR KOI POND?**

This question needs to be answered with the same level of honesty and practicality that the question of "Money" was! Think about how much time you "think" you may have to spend keeping up your Koi Pond and then double it! Is this more time than you're happy to put in or not? This is another area that should be discussed with your professional koi pond consultant.

**DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT LOCATION FOR A KOI POND?**

Just like real estate, it's all about Location! Location! Location! Your Koi pond needs to be where it can be admired and
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enjoyed BUT it also wants to be located with the following considerations in mind.

To begin with, your pond needs indirect sunlight where possible so that the water temperature doesn't undergo huge daily variations. Also try not to place it under a tree where it will collect a lot of leaves and other debris - you don't want to spend any more time than necessary scooping out leaves.

Finally, don't forget to consider building restrictions from your local council or authority and check for underground pipes and cables before you commence.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO LEARN ABOUT KOI AND THEIR NEEDS?

Take the time to do your homework. This will minimize the mistakes that are easily made from guesswork, and could save you a great deal of time, money and effort. There are lots of resources available for you to take advantage of. Try talking to Koi enthusiasts or visit Koi fish club meetings.

CAN YOU DIG DEEP ENOUGH FOR A KOI POND?

Depth is critical to the success of your Koi Pond. Too deep and it becomes impractical to clean, to catch Koi if necessary, and let's face it, it becomes too costly to build. Too shallow and your Koi might not have enough shelter from would be
predators like cats and birds or shelter from the heat of a summer's day.

If you are excited about the prospect of hand feeding your new pets, then think about having a shallow area that you can stand in while feeding them. You will still need to have the remainder of the pond at a minimum depth of at least 3 or 4 feet, but ideally, if you can manage it, 5 or 6 feet is better. If creating a multi-level pond, be careful not to create static areas where the water does not circulate sufficiently, as this provides places for serious diseases to breed and for debris to collect. This can cause major problems with water quality.

WHAT "EXTRAS" DO YOU WANT WITH YOUR KOI POND?

Would you like "Fries" with that? I mean, would you like Fry in your pond? If you're thinking about breeding Koi somewhere in the future, you will have to ask about this at the same time you are consulting with the professional pond builder. There are various "extras" that may need to be factored in for the purposes of spawning.

Likewise, if you are looking at the aesthetics of the pond itself, you may want to investigate the cost of adding a "Waterfall" which can greatly aid in the oxygenation of the water and consequently affect the size of any filtration unit required.

Pond plants can also add to the expense - be sure you do your research here as you can't put in any plants you like - that's an
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entire other subject. There are many other materials that need to be factored into the cost of your pond that come under the heading of "necessities" rather than "extras".

These may include but are not limited to such things as a biological filter, pipes, settlement chambers, a de-chlorinator, bird netting, drains, pumps, skimmers, heating, plus more. Again, these should all be discussed with your consultant at the planning stage.

The answer to this one, even after all of the above, should be a resounding "YES", otherwise, go and buy yourself a goldfish bowl - it will be a lot less expensive with a lot less work, but ultimately, will be a lot less rewarding (no disrespect to goldfish intended!). If the answer is in fact "YES" then great! You have many years ahead to look forward to as your pets grow in size, personality and beauty!

Are you looking for a realistic, user-friendly way to Create & Maintain a Stunning Koi Fish Pond to Suit your Budget, Time and Spaces? Get more tips and advice here today. While you are there, you can sign up for the Free Email Course on Complete Koi Pond

Construction Tips and Koi Maintenance.
How to Create the Perfect Backyard Pond

This free step-by-step mini-course is designed to teach you all of the essentials on purchasing, identifying, keeping and breeding Koi fish, as well as planning, building and maintaining your Koi pond.

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/expert/Kate_Nakamura/789905](http://EzineArticles.com/expert/Kate_Nakamura/789905)

CLICK HERE for Complete Information About Building and Maintaining A Koi Fish Pond!

KOI KEEPING BASICS - WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN BEFORE YOU BEGIN WITH KOI

By William Kelly

The trouble with keeping Koi is that it's one of those hobbies where you need to know everything about it before you begin doing anything.

This is because the consequences of making a mistake, one that is fundamental, right in the beginning are considerably more onerous than with many other hobbies. If your pond for
example, is badly built and develops a leak, say after a year, it will cost you substantial money and effort to resolve the problem. Not to mention the strain your Koi will take during the process!

Do not jump in and build your pond until you are intimately familiar with the following terms:

Mechanical filtration and why sand filters are bad

Biological filtration

The Nitrogen Cycle

Nitrifying bacteria - what they are and what they do

Denitrifying bacteria - what they are and what they do

Heterotrophic and autotrophic bacteria

Organic and inorganic waste products - what they are and what happens to them

Notice that I said you! Not your dealer and not your pond builder. You and only you! You are the one who has to live with the results. Your dealer will sell you more kit, your pond builder will build you another pond but the success of your pond rests with you!

References to other systems that the dealer has sold, or other ponds and filtration systems that the pond builder has built count for very little. Plenty of people before you have bought
the wrong thing - that doesn't mean that you should too! The Koi keeper in each of these 'references' is the ultimate determination of success or failure and this can only be measured in years or better, decades.

I will cover these issues in upcoming articles. Once you understand all this, you will be far better equipped to tackle Koi keeping. In the worst case scenario, you may decide to settle for a small aquarium, but rather that than end up with a disaster and poorer in both spirit and pocket.

The principle of avoiding fundamental mistakes applies equally with filtration systems. As a Koi keeper you are bound to make mistakes but don't make the expensive ones that are the toughest to cure. Seek advice and search for facts. Koi keeping is not about smoke, mirrors and snake oil.

It is in fact a highly scientific hobby which means that it is in fact easy to establish whether you are being led by the nose or not. Facts are either scientifically provable or they're not. Getting to the facts can sometimes be a challenge on its own! Try a sand filter salesman to see what I mean.

The real crunch in the hobby though is that Koi are tough fish. If Koi were as flimsy as say an exotic species like Discus, which require highly specific water conditions, it is doubtful that the hobby would ever have taken off.
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It takes a lot to kill off a Koi and a less than adequate filtration system may only strike in years to come, when something completely unrelated sets off a chain of events that culminates in weakened Koi that are then simply wiped out by the inadequate filtration system.

The poor Koi keeper is left wondering what happened. He then proceeds the way of many before him, with a shovel, lots of sand and a determination to fill in what was once a treasured feature of his garden, his Koi pond.

I am not a Koi pond builder or construction expert. I do however know what is needed in a Koi pond and would suggest that if you are serious about keeping Koi your pond has to be at least 10 000l. Smaller than that please consider keeping goldfish if you don't want to regularly bury Koi. Koi grow too big to be kept confined in smaller environments than 10 000l.

As with all things Koi, bigger is better. Size counts for everything, even with the Koi themselves. Bear this in mind when it comes to selecting your filtration equipment. If you do your homework into the hobby and you do things properly the first time, your Koi will live and prosper and they will grow. This increase in growth places an increased demand on your filtration system.

It sounds obvious, but a 40cm Koi 665 grams on average is very different from a 90cm Koi that can weigh 8448 grams on
average. That's twelve times the weight of Koi and twelve times more filtration load!

It still amazes me that people still buy bio filters that are 'rated to treat XXX l of pond water'! Such a rating is completely and utterly meaningless. My biggest problem with it is that it is deliberately misleading to the detriment of the purchaser. What if there is only one single fish in this pond? What if there are a hundred? What if these fish are all 10 kg or heavier? What if they're Koi and not goldfish?

The only meaningful rating is one which indicates how many kilograms of Koi fish weight the bio filter is capable of handling, and at what speed (rate) the bio filter is able to breakdown wastes.

It's no good if the bio filter takes three days to remove the wastes produced by Koi - no Koi would be very happy at only being fed once every three days! Remember too that Koi on a weight for weight basis produce about twice as much filtration load as goldfish do - Koi are not known as the 'pigs of dams and rivers' without good reason!

My advice is that any bio filter offering a rating based on pond volume is seriously flawed. Stay away. The designers of these so called bio filters have made a guess as to how many fish would be living in such and such a pond volume, and worse, they've guessed how big these fish are.
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Even worse, if they have made all these guesses, do they in fact know how many milligrams of ammonia the filter is capable of removing per hour at a specified flow rate and under what conditions? My guess is that they have no idea. In modern Koi keeping, this is nothing short of genocide.

The one thing that I can promise you is that once your fish load exceeds these guesses, the only certainty is that your local Koi graveyard is going to be doing a lot more business!

There is no substitute for homework when it comes to Koi keeping. It's a lot of fun and tremendously rewarding to see the results in action. Don't be put off, the processes are not that complicated to understand. All it takes is time. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get second opinions.

Do your homework and be rewarded. Fail to do it, and be condemned!

William Kelly

William Kelly is a Koi hobbyist dragged into the business kicking and screaming. He runs http://www.happykoi.co.za/article.htm as a koi keeping information website hopefully that helps with a deeper understanding of what it takes to keep Koi happy and healthy.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/expert/William_Kelly/26003
IMPORTANT KOI FOOD MISTAKES TO AVOID

By Alan Deacon

Even though Koi are a hardy breed of fish there are several Koi food mistakes you will want to avoid.

One of the biggest mistakes you can make is overfeeding. Many people think if some is good then more must be better. Rather than feeding too much at once it is better to feed smaller amounts less frequently. You should offer your Koi more food only if it is eaten very quickly.

Excess Koi food won't necessarily harm your fish, but if they overeat they don't digest it as efficiently, and simply release it into the pond as a waste product. This extra waste pollutes the water and causes your filter to work harder.

If you spot any uneaten food in your pond remove it as soon as possible, before it decomposes in the water and produces toxins that can harm your fish!
Another mistake is to feed your Koi too often or not often enough. The frequency of your Koi feedings will vary according to the temperature. When temperatures are around 68 degrees F (20 degrees C) Koi food should be offered 2 - 3 times per day. In cooler temperatures (50-59 degrees F or 10-15 degrees C) you need only offer Koi food once per day. If your Koi are kept in a heated pond then feed them according to the temperature the pond is kept at.

Making sudden changes to new brands or types of food is another mistake you should take care to avoid. This will frequently result in your Koi refusing to eat. If you do decide to make a change you need to do it gradually. Start by mixing a little of the new food in with the old. Over a span of 7 - 10 days gradually increase the amount of the new Koi food in proportion to the old until you have completed the switch.

While it is a great idea to feed your Koi some live insects, another mistake you should not make is to offer any stinging or biting insects. Fireflies also make dangerous Koi food since the chemicals that cause them to glow are toxic and can kill your fish.

Additionally, there are particular foods that can be fed to other pond fish that should not be used for Koi. These include birdseed, corn, peanuts, bread, rice and peas. The reason that bread based foods and rice make poor Koi food is because they
swell when exposed to water and can cause intestinal obstructions.

Seeds, corn and peanuts are a poor food choice as well because they can also cause blockages because Koi can't digest them. Peas and other carbohydrate laden foods are not good for Koi because they can lead to obesity in your fish.

One last mistake you may want to avoid is over-supplementation. Many Koi fish enthusiasts choose to supplement with extra nutrients. There is nothing wrong with this BUT make sure to check with your veterinarian before making any dietary supplement an additional staple in your Koi food plan. Just like too little of a nutrient can be a detriment to your Koi's health, so can too much of a nutrient.

All things considered feeding Koi is not an overly difficult task. With a little information and planning you can avoid making mistakes with Koi food.

The author, Alan Deacon, is a Koi expert. If you would like more information about Koi food or Koi care visit KoiCareBasics.com

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