



NEWSLETTER SAKKS KZN MAY 2020



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Dear Members

I hope everyone is keeping well during this time of Lockdown and I'm sure we are all looking forward to certain restrictions being lifted. During this time you've all been enjoying your Koi and possibly given them all names by now and also given your ponds some much needed attention!

Meanwhile . . . A reminder that

Membership fees are due—the invoices have been sent out.

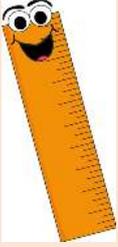
Virtual Koi Show 2020—The judges look forward to judging your Koi. As well as all those who normally enter, this is also a great opportunity for those who don't normally enter their Koi in any competitions to do so. At the moment the deadline for entries is 30 June.

Virtual Pond Safari— this is an opportunity to showcase your pond in our Newsletter. I'm sure there are many of you who have never hosted a Pond Safari!

Keep safe and take care

Regards, Les Ferreira





Making your own bowl

Making your own measuring bowl

By Mike Harvey



In 2005 Harry Beckx and I had the privilege of judging at the Australian Koi Association Koi Show in Sydney. It was at this time that I met a true koi kichi hobbyist, Heinz Zimmermann. We have remained great friends over the years via emails and Heinz's regular telephone calls which are highly appreciated. During a recent call, Heinz was enquiring about our virtual KZN Koi Competition organized after the cancellation of our annual koi show this year. The conversation got around to discussing bowling, measuring and photographing koi for a show. Heinz mentioned that many years ago two brothers, Max and Ron Farrugia, members of the AKA, had come up with the idea of making their own measuring bowl. Heinz has adopted this idea for himself and currently uses it whenever he needs to photograph his koi when entering them on shows. I was intrigued to know more about this DIY measuring bowl and Heinz very kindly took photographs of his own bowl which very clearly show just how easy it is to make one for yourself.

I believe that the method of making your own bowl is clearly evident from the accompanying photographs he sent to me so I won't describe what you need and how to go about making one yourself.

In the photograph with a koi in the bowl you can see one of Heinz's beautiful home bred Goshiki.

Heinz points out "I simply bowl straight into the tub (the same way, as we do at the Show, when a Judge requests an individual Koi be put into a bowl – see photograph of Heinz demonstrating this). Doing it like this directly in the pond water is particularly helpful with big Koi/Jumbos: no stress in catching and bagging, carrying, etc. This way float it in, adjust the water level, take photo, then tip your champion gently back into the pond. But it's best done that way with two people. I can also use that tub for Salt bathing a new, incoming fish. For your record keeping, it can at the same time be measured and photographed."

One addition that could be added is the insertion of a vinyl measuring tape as such rather than simply marking off the cm's with a permanent marker pen. Some vinyl measuring tapes have been made locally and overseas if one can find them.

One of the benefits of this drum measuring bowl is that the bowl itself is concave and the deepest part of the water is in the middle of the drum so that the koi tend to remain straight when photographing them. With the bowl floating in the pond it is also safer in case the koi jump out. If it is not practical to float the bowl in the water, the bowl can be stabilized using bricks, or similar, to keep it horizontal. Further, if used outside the pond, it's advantageous to place the bowl on a large, wet sheet of plastic, to avoid scale damage, in case a koi decides to "go overboard".

If anyone takes up this DIY suggestion we would love to see photographs of your own bowl.



Making your own bowl



**When should I stop feeding my fish in the winter?**

Opinions vary on correct winter feeding practices, however ultimately your fish will decide when they no longer need feeding. During very cold spells, or following sudden falls in temperature, they may retreat to the base of the pond and remain inactive. Under these conditions you should not offer them food, as it will go uneaten. Don't forget about them though – given time their bodies will make the necessary physiological adaptations to the cold, and they may become active again. If you see them coming to the surface and looking for food, offer them a small amount of a special winter diet. It is important to maintain their energy reserves, as otherwise these will diminish through the winter, leaving them more vulnerable to infection during the spring “wake-up”. The amount you need to feed will be much less (perhaps one small meal every day or two), however it can make all the difference to your fish. Don't get hung up on minimum feeding temperatures – if the thermometer reads 3°C and the fish are actively looking for food, offer them some. Equally, if it's 8°C and they are inactive, leave them. Remember that if they're active they are burning energy and looking to replace it.

**Is it necessary to soak koi food before using it?**

Only do this if a food specifically states that it is necessary. Nowadays it is unusual to find a good quality koi food that recommends soaking, and in fact you can decrease the nutritional quality of the product by doing so. This is because certain nutrients, such as water soluble vitamins, leach out of the food once it makes contact with the water. A well-manufactured diet will soften quickly, allowing koi to eat it rapidly.

Winter feeding continued

Can I feed wheatgerm all year?

Wheatgerm is very digestible (around 93% for koi), both at high and low temperatures, although it is usually found in winter foods. This is because it maintains its high digestibility at low temperatures, and adds additional fibre to the diet which aids its passage through the digestive system. Wheatgerm is also rich in vitamins E, B1, B2, B6, and nicotinic acid. Feed trials have shown that some wheatgerm-based diets can be effectively utilised down to at least 4°C, thus providing valuable nutrition during the colder months. The one drawback with wheatgerm is its cost (it makes up only 1.5% of a grain of wheat), which is why good quality winter feeds are more expensive. This is not a problem in the winter, as the amount being fed is much lower. However, in the warmer months it can become an expensive way to feed hungry koi. Having said this, many koi keepers swear by wheatgerm-based diets, and feed them all year with very good results. So in short, yes you can feed Wheatgerm all year, however whether you do will depend on whether the performance you get from it is worth the additional expense. If not, foods specifically formulated for warmer parts of the year would be a better option.



Do I need to supplement my koi's diet?

The answer to this question depends on what their current diet is. Just as with us, supplements are only necessary if the rest of our diet is deficient in one or more nutrients. For example, we might take vitamin C tablets if we don't eat much fruit or veg. However, also just like us, supplements can be dangerous if fed on top of an otherwise balanced diet. If you invest in a good quality koi food, it should contain everything your fish need in the correct proportions. Supplementation of such diets is unnecessary, and potentially harmful. If you are not feeding a good quality food, some form of supplementation might be beneficial. However, this is not usually a recommended strategy for caring for koi, as if got wrong the fish will suffer.



How should I store my koi food?

Proper storage of koi food is essential if you are to maintain its quality. The enemies of koi food are oxygen, light, moisture, heat, and of course pests. Consequently, food should be stored in a sealed container or bag, in a cool, dry, dark area. This will preserve its nutrient content and keep it fresh for longer. If pests are a problem then invest in a re-sealable rigid plastic container that you can decant bags of food into. Clean and thoroughly dry it each time it's refilled.

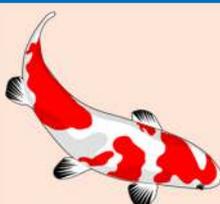


Pellet sizes

The ideal size of pellet is a common talking point amongst koi keepers, with some preferring to feed small pellets even to larger fish. From a scientific perspective, ideal pellet size is related to the diameter of the mouth and throat, as this determines the maximum size of food a fish can consume. A good quality food will soften readily, and then be crushed by the pharyngeal ('throat') teeth. Consequently, as long as it can be ingested, pellet size will make little difference to a diet's digestibility. In fact, a larger pellet is ideal as it delivers more nutrition and energy in a single 'gulp', thus improving net energy gain (something that fish have evolved to maximise). The only benefit of feeding smaller foods would perhaps be if they were of poorer quality and did not soften quickly, making it harder for the fish to deal with them.

Treat foods

As with all animals, the occasional treat is enjoyed by koi and can be fun to feed. Popular treats include lettuce, silkworm pupae, earthworms and oranges, all of which are eagerly consumed. As with treats that we enjoy, moderation is the key. An excess of treat foods will unbalance the diet, leading to excesses or deficiencies that can have negative consequences. As a rough rule of thumb, keep treats to less than 5% of your fish's overall diet.



Empty rectangular box with a blue border.



Empty rectangular box with a green border.

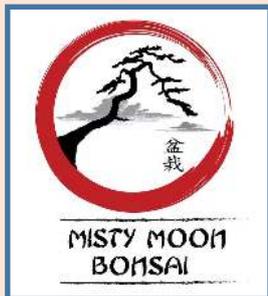
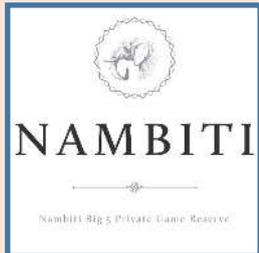
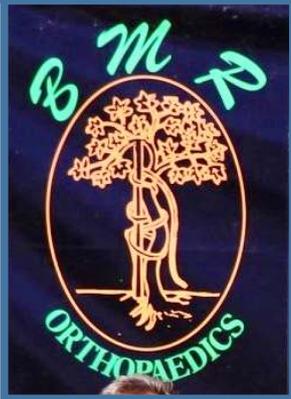




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The Dealers, Sponsors & individual members that were involved in making the 2019 Koi Show a huge success!



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 For the love of Fish
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 Krian Pillay
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 Mike Harvey
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 Queensburgh Animal Clinic
 Rocky's Armature Winders
 Roy Pillay Insurance
 SAKKS Eastern Cape Chapter
 Shogun - Chris Neaves
 SMG Ballito
 South East Koi Club
 Toen Feyen
 Transport.com
 Ultra Zap



Don't forget to send any photos of your Koi Ponds to me if you would like for them to feature in our next Newsletter, we would love to see them! Thanks, Les



If anyone has any suggestions regarding articles or information that they would like to see appear in the Newsletter, please email Les Ferreira and we will look into it. Any Questions with regards to Koi related issues that we can try our best to answer too!

Don't forget to look out for our Koi KZN Chapter page on FaceBook

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