

NORTHERN GOLDFISH & PONDKEEPERS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



A Nationwide Society

Online Version

October 2014

The NGPS Open Show 2014



Nationwide Judges busy judging the NGPS 2014 Open Show at St Matthews Hall, Stretford on Saturday 13th September. The 175 tanks contained most Goldfish varieties in 64 Classes with members of all four Nationwide Societies attending. These were NEGS, Bristol and AMGK as well as ourselves. It was our 37th – the very first NGPS Open Show was in Bolton and there were 21 Classes with 10p entry cost (visitors 15p, children 5p). Visitors are now free and there was all day hot & cold food, video displays, large raffle and prizes with an auction with 24 home bred Goldfish. (A copy of the very first OS advert is on the front of our September Newsletter.)

Minutes of the October Meeting



There was a good turnout for the October meeting including our President and a special visit by member Craig Clinton – who brought these Ranchus.

The Black Ranchus were particularly interesting, being intensely black all over. These varieties and many other Fancy Goldfish are now being imported by 'Ranchu.london' from Thailand. Orders for specific varieties can be placed with them via Craig. **Ring him for details on 07954178895.**

Prices are good – these show quality Ranchus were bought for £25 each – half the usual value.

VP David Ford gave a slide show about the Festival of Fishkeeping held in London over the weekend of 4th & 5th October. This annual show is by the FBAS and includes their finals for the British Open, Supreme Champions and Diamond Championship – full details are on their 'fbas.co.uk' website.

Unlike last year, there was no Goldfish Competition, the only entry being the Bob Esson Memorial Award for the best Common Goldfish. GSGB had a

small stand. Members agreed that we would like to attend in 2015, but only if the social content is included, something that was present in the Holiday Camp venues, but now absent in the Urban Farm venue in Hounslow.

Next meeting at the Church Inn, Prestwich will be on November 11th at 8pm, see you there...

Chairman's Report

There is a lot to report, so this will be added to the printed version of our Newsletter. All will be published here soon.

Meanwhile, herewith the final article in the Pond Tips Trilogy....

Ten Top Tips for the Autumn Pond by VP David Ford



See our Online March issue for the 10 Springtime Tips and Online July issue for the 10 Summertime Tips. Here is the final article in the trilogy, reproduced from the (now defunct) Water Gardener magazine. However, the advice has details no longer valid, so the 10 listed here have been updated as follows.....

1. Remove the Autumn Leaves

For ponds it is the Autumn clean-up that is important, not a Spring-clean. The reason is that rotting debris is dangerous to the fish when Winter brings cold waters and the fish sink to the bottom in hibernation. The biggest cause of pollution is the fall of Autumn leaves, so do remove them from the surface before they can sink to that bottom. As soon as the trees are bare, so no more leaves are expected, any that have sunk should be removed too.

2. Use a Snow Scoop

It is not easy to remove sludge from a pond base, but if the water is lowered or even emptied, a good tool for scooping out the debris is to use a plastic snow scoop. For the pond that is full, a fishing net can be lined with a fine cloth (such as muslin) to lift out the sludge. Koi keepers with their swimming pool type ponds have powered suction tubes that keep the base super clean. This system is not really suitable for the natural pond, but some debris, especially rotting leaves, can be sucked out with such mechanical units – perhaps borrowed from the Koi-keepers.



A snow shovel is ideal for scooping pond sludge.

3. Rapid Repairs

If the concrete pond is drained for cleaning, check the sides for cracks that may enlarge with Winter frosts (especially along the water line). Make the fine cracks bigger with a hammer and chisel and use a rapid setting cement to reseal the gaps. After 24 hours make the area water tight by painting with a waterproofing compound (most DIY centres sell these products) and again leave 24 hours before refilling the pond.



Use rapid setting cement to fill cracks

and seal with pond varnish



Feed the fish well in Autumn ready for their Winter fast.

4. Good Nutrition



The fishes' appetite will fall away as the water cools, so Autumn feeding is important to build up a good reserve of fats and vitamins within the fish. The essential fat for fish is oils, not solid fat (as found in mammals like us) so feed scraps of oily fish and commercial diets that claim to be high in fish oils. No kitchen scraps based on beef, sheep or pigs, nor processed foods such as hams, burgers or sausages. The commercial fish foods that are advertised as 'complete' i.e. they contain added vitamins and minerals, are needed too. Feed daily until the fish lose interest (usually when the water temperature falls below 8°C).

5. Bring in any Fancy Fish

One of the earlier tips was to add any Fancy Goldfish (or even coolwater exotics such as Paradise Fish or Livebearers) in the Summertime. These must be returned to the indoor ponds or aquaria as soon as the cool nights start affecting the water temperature. Goldfish such as Veiltails, Moors, Orandas and Pearlscales are only happy down to 10°C. The more streamlined Fancy Goldfish, including Shubunkins and Comets, can be left overwinter, especially if they are pond rather than aquarium-bred.

6. A Water Change



Do not throw pondwater away, add the nutrient rich water to the garden soil.

The Summer pond will have built-up a high concentration of dissolved solids, especially if there has been a drought. It is evaporation loss that concentrates these solids and even rainwater is not so pure it will dilute the pond again. Therefore a substantial water change is always good for the fish before the rigours of Winter are faced. Use a pump or siphon, even a bucket, to remove up to a quarter of the total volume and replace with tapwater. At one quarter level the change in chemistry is not so dramatic that it will stress the fish and the dilution factor means the chlorine in the water will not affect the fish...but note Tip No. 7 below.....

7. A Dechlorinator Device

When adding tapwater the hosepipe can be strapped to a broom head with the handle rammed into the soil near the pond edge. The water then cascades down and the turbulence ejects up to 50% of the added chlorine. Note that Water Authorities rely on automatic injections at the weekends when fewer staff are on duty, so it is better to take tapwater in the weekdays when monitoring is more effective and chlorine levels are lower. If the pond is small (because of the cost) the Dechlorinators sold for aquarium use can be used.

8. Clean the Filters

The Summer will have brought much biological material into the filter system. This will have been converted by bacteria into a sludge called mulm. It is best removed ready for the Winter, but do not also remove the bacteria. Rinse away the mulm by back flushing or sluicing or dowsing, according to what type of filter is used. But keep the filter material *in situ* where possible. The mulm can be used on the garden plants as a valuable fertiliser, rich in nitrates.



9. Late Night Viewing

You can still enjoy your watergarden as the evenings draw in. Use submersible lights that illuminate a fountain or waterfall. Make sure it is a low voltage system for economy and safety. The surrounds can be lit with photoelectric controlled solar-powered lighting...even the 'Pound Shops' sell them these days.

10. Furniture Storage

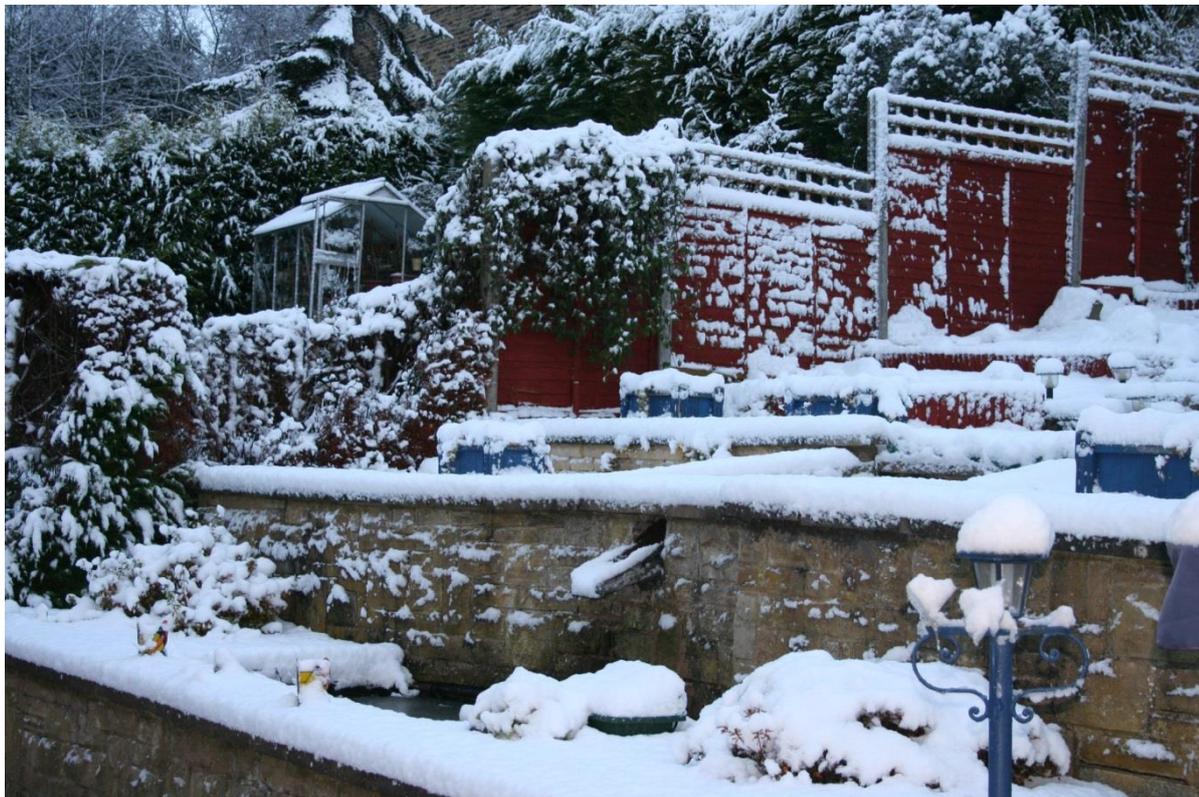
Move that garden furniture when it gets too cold to sit by the pond, pack the garden furniture into a shed or store in a loft. Even if made from plastic (or plastic coated metal), the Winter frosts will discolour the plastic and make it brittle, even crack. Only treated wooden furniture can be left in place by the pond.

Winter means little or no activity, so the series is a trilogy rather than a tetralogy.

The only tip for wintertime is to keep an area free of ice so the water can 'breathe'. Leaving a broom floating on the surface that can be twisted to break the ice is best (never by striking the ice, the sound waves within the ice box can kill fish).

Turn off power filters, fountains and waterfalls in icy weather. They can still be used in the heated pond....the Koi-keepers often use pond heaters all Winter – possible for Goldfish, but very expensive! A small floating heater is available to just keep a circle of water free of ice – still expensive though, a broom is much cheaper.

The Winter pond is still attractive.....the fish should be asleep.



This is the Online Monthly Newsletter. A printed version is available for members without computers, posted every two months. A copy of that Newsletter is published online at <http://ngps.webplus.net/> (for mobile phones).

Back copies of all the year's Newsletters are listed on both NGPS websites as downloadable PDFs.

