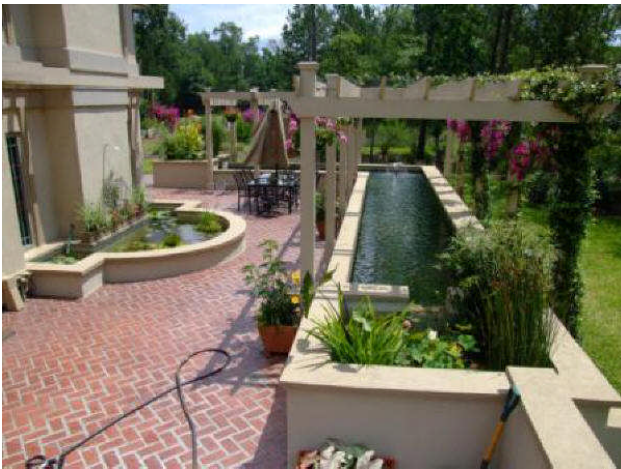




Charleston Showa Koi Club

Last Meeting....

Our last meeting was held at the home of Margaret Seres on August 9th at 2:00. Cindy had information prepared for us about another koi grow out contest. The rules are as follows.



Cindy has arranged for us to receive koi from San Joaquin Koi. Please see below for information and contest rules.

Breeder: Richard Rombold (San Joaquin Koi www.sjkoi.com).

Variety: a mix of Sanke and Kokahu, approximately the same size. Cost: \$10 each, limit of 1 per adult member (2 for family memberships).

Richard is graciously donating 30 koi. If we need more than 30, our club will purchase them.

Here are the modified rules based on the voting we had at the meeting yesterday. It's a little different than last year:

The koi purchase money will all be pooled and will be used as prize money. 75% goes to the winner(s) of the growth contest and 25% goes to the winner(s) of the quality contest. The club will cover shipping and QT supplies. Koi must be raised outside either in a quarantine tank or a pond (no heated aquariums outside). You must raise your own fish (not have

someone else keep your fish for you). Koi will be distributed at the October meeting. Because Cindy feels it is unnecessarily stressful (for the fish....not you) to net fish for photographs in the winter, we will not require a photo for the first quarter. The first progress photo will be due at the meeting in April. The second progress photo will be due at the meeting in July. The final picture is due at the October 2010 meeting. Failure to supply these progress pictures on time will result in disqualification of that koi. If you are unable to attend the meeting(s), you are free to have another member submit your photo.

PRIZE Category:

Growth:

Since all koi are starting out very close in size, the first award will be for the largest koi at the end of the contest. The photos must show the koi with a ruler in the tank. Because methods of measuring koi may vary, if at the end of the contest there are multiple koi that measure within 1/4" of each other, they will split the prize money.

Quality (best on day of judging):

For this award, digital photographs must be submitted to our contest record keeper, Gwen. These photos will be sent to one of the AKCA Judges. Since this is a photo beauty contest, take the best photo you can. Rulers should not be in this picture since size does not matter for this part of the contest. We will be doing quality a little differently. It's not necessarily the owner of the winning koi that gets the prize! The winner will be the person (or persons) who correctly predicted in the beginning of the contest that the koi would be the best in the end.

Cindy will provide individual photos of each koi in September. These will either be posted on the website or Emailed out in a zip file. You can study all the pictures, and at the October meeting you must bring the photo of the koi that you predict

will be the best at the end of the contest. Of course, if the photos prove to be too difficult we may go visual during the October meeting - it will be Cindy's decision when she receives and photographs the koi in September. At the end, if the koi you guessed is judged to be the best, you win! If multiple people guess the same koi, they will all share the prize money.

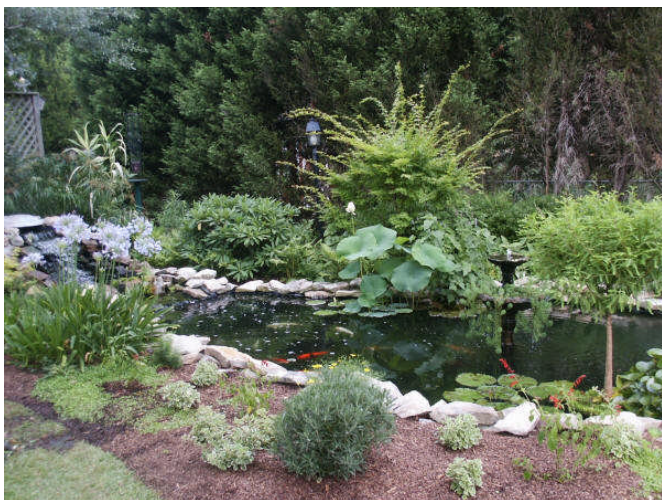
Fish Distribution:

On the morning of the meeting, Cindy and Charlie will bag each koi individually and transport them to the club meeting. Each bag will be numbered. Participants will draw numbers to see which koi is theirs. If you wish, you may trade your koi at the meeting but you must inform the contest organizers so your new koi's number can be recorded. These koi will all be very close in size and quality but some will be Sanke and some will be Kohaku. If you are unable to pick-up your koi at the October meeting, please make arrangements.

Note: If you pay for a koi and do not pick it up or make arrangements, your money will not be returned. Abandoned koi may be adopted by another member.

Next Meeting...

Our next meeting will be at Chris and Mark's house on September 20th at 2:00. Those who ordered grow out fish will be able to pick them up so if you can't get to the meeting please have someone pick up your fish for you.



Calendar of events...

September 20 – Chris and Mark

September 18 – 20 **Atlanta Show**

October 11 Chuck and Beth

October 16-18 **NCKWS show in Cary**

November 6-8 **Charlotte Show**

November 15 – Ty

December 13 -Surprise

Meeting times and places may be subject to change.

Off to the Show!

Getting your fish ready to go.

By Beth Lisenby

When you decide you want to show your Koi there are a few things you need to do first. You need to move your fish to a holding tank with clear, clean water and adequate filtration. This will help the whites to whiten and the other colors to brighten. One week before you plan to move your fish you need to stop all feeding; this will make for a better move (less ammonia). The day of the move you need to get a bag large enough for the fish, place your fish in the bag with clean water, add oxygen and tie the bag up. Place the bag in a large cooler for the trip. Always remember to put the fish upfront with you, NO trunks, it's too hot! As soon as you arrive at your destination, float the bag and release the Koi as soon as possible. Happy showing! When you get ready to go home, repeat the bagging process. Usually the show will have oxygen but if you can carry your own that's always best.

And If You Buy a Fish...

Quarantine, Quarantine, Quarantine!!!

It is vital that you have a tank set up to isolate your fish before introducing them into your pond with your healthy Koi. When you place your fish in a quarantine tank you can check for signs of disease. Make sure to use your test kit on your quarantine tank just as you do on your main pond. Don't let anything slip up on you. Be sure to watch your ammonia, Ph, and water temperature, along with everything else. You should leave your fish in this tank for at least 30 days with the water 76 to 80 degrees.

For more in depth details on quarantining your fish, check with your local KHA.

Selecting Koi for Show or for Pond and How They are Judged

by Dr. Arthur Lembke, Maryland
(part one of a two part article)

To understand how Koi are selected for pond or show, you must first understand how they are judged. Koi are judged based on:

CONFORMATION

COLOR

PATTERN

QUALITY

IMPOSING

APPEARANCE

All Koi are judged based on these five elements, regardless of the variety. The only difference would then be the individual standards for that variety.

CONFORMATION

Conformation includes the body shape, the proportions of the body, finnage, head shape, width at the eyes and shoulders and so on. Differences in body occur at different ages of Koi and we must recognize this proper development over time. The proper body can show power and elegance at the same time. As a Koi matures the body becomes that much more important. When young, pattern and color are most important, but when a Koi gets older it must show power. The Head should be wide and the nose should be rounded. If the nose is too pointy the fish will lack elegance. The forehead area should have a gradual descent from the shoulder to the nose. If it cuts too quickly down the head looks more like a shark. The forehead should be slightly convex, not flat. Faces, around the cheeks, can be rounded or more squared at the jaw depending on bloodline, but both are OK. There is a perfect triangle that the eyes and nose form that you will recognize as you get more experience. If the nose is too short or long it can throw off the conformation. This triangle is almost an equilateral triangle. Look at pictures of Show winners and study this. The Body is said to be Torpedo Shaped. The widest part, if looking down, is between the back of the gill plates to the leading ray of the dorsal fin. If the widest point is at the gills and cuts back too fast to the tail, then the fish has no power. If the widest part extends back further than this, then the Koi has a chubby type appearance and this too lacks power. The tail tube should be thick to depict power. From the side you would follow the same rules without the stomach hanging down too much. If the lowest

point is under the gills, then the Koi is said to be pigeon-chested. Choman is a stomach disorder where the stomach hangs down at the back the furthest. The stomach should be carried in a muscular way rather than a flabby way. Make sure the spine is straight. Watch it swim and see if everything is carried straight. Also look from the side to see if the fish carries itself properly. Make sure the head or tail is straight out and not facing up or down.

Fins are very important too. The pectoral fins should be wide almost like angel wings to give elegance. Large pectorals are good as long as they are in proportion. They should have strong edges, not frayed. Check the leading rays to make sure they extend all the way out to the end. Sometimes these are trimmed if damaged. Make sure all fins are there and not damaged. The Dorsal fin should have a strong front ray and when in a raised position should have no holes or show any signs of past fin rot. The tail should be powerful and not wispy. The anal fin is subject to damage by fin rot and netting so check it. Look for any signs of scar tissue from previously broken fins.

COLOR

Color is a product of genetics, bloodline, pond conditions, and age and, to some extent, sex of the Koi. Good water will bring out good color. If genetics are not good then good water will not matter. And if genetics are good and the water poor, then you still get bad results. Color has to be uniform throughout the fish. All the whites, reds, blacks, Matsuba, blues, have to be the same on all parts of the fish. There should not be any windows in the color. Color should exist in clear groupings of at least three scales large. Color must have thickness. It should be clear and not dirtied by spots. You should not see white between the colors as the fish moves. Color should have a healthy gloss and not be dull. When Koi are young the color is thinner and the scales are more opaque. This is why we see more blurred Sashi (leading edge of pattern clarity) at an earlier age and when the scale gets thicker it tightens up. Young, immature females can have a more yellow appearance to the skin from carotene in the skin, but as they mature the carotene goes to egg production and the skin gets more white. Color and body is what you always look for whether you are buying Show Koi or Pond Koi. The difference between a pond Koi and a Show Koi is that the Show Koi has a good pattern and higher

skin quality which makes it more valued. The difference between an Expensive Show Koi and a Very Expensive Show Koi is the degree of the skin quality and small elegance points that are sought after by collectors. It may be a different arrangement of color near the tail, it might be a Head Pattern, and it might be the placement of color around the dorsal. There are many things in Koi Appreciation that value a Koi.

PATTERN

Pattern is very important in selecting Show Koi. Pattern has its own rules in the different varieties. The one thing that is common, amongst all the varieties, is that the pattern must be balanced. Balanced from left to right and balanced from front to back.

For true balance, if the Koi is divided front to back in thirds rather than halves, all sections should be balanced. If all the color is in the front we call it front heavy, in the back called back heavy. Pattern should have a good edge. The trailing edge is called kiwa at the back of the red or black color, where it touches the white. It should be very sharp looking and can be full scaled Maruzome or follow a straight line in the case of Kamisori kiwa. If the red or black is thick enough it will cover the scale behind it, which is white, very well. Therefore, giving the clean edge.

The front edge of the pattern where it is overlapped by white is called Sashi. Sashi takes longer to clear as it takes more years for the white scale to thicken to cover the darker scale underneath. Many times, on a high quality Shiro Utsuri, where the second color is intense black, the Sashi never becomes totally straight. The black is so thick, that the white can never cover it up. Therefore sometimes an unclear sashi can be acceptable if the color is real thick, but even then the sashi must be of uniform thickness. Say one or two scales. As you see, there is a whole appreciation for Kiwa and Sashi. These are much harder to attain on Wagoi (scaled) Koi than Doitsu (scaleless). For this reason, Wagoi are more valued than Doitsu. The harder it is for the Koi to attain that perfect look the more valued.

Colors must be in the right proportion on the Koi. Larger patterns on a large fish seem to give a vision of power. Small patterns on small fish are said to be cute. Small patterns on a large fish lack elegance and show weakness. After all, the Koi is a symbol of strength in the Japanese culture. Patterns that wrap deeply around the fish, called

Maki, are said to show a more powerful look. Nose and tail color, ending the same, tend to frame a Koi and give elegance. A pattern that travels around the dorsal fin rather than through it, is elegant. Deep insertions of color that have many edges to show the clarity of kiwa are preferred. Where it is harder to attain perfection on the fish, it is more prized if they are perfect. Sort of like bonus points for being difficult. The prize is in the journey or challenge. If a fish is easier to breed, say like an Ogon or Shusui, then they are less valued and considered less elegant. A complex fish like a wagoi Showa is highly valued when everything is just right. Pattern needs interest to get your attention. It is said to be like a Japanese Garden. First, the head pattern draws you into the garden. Then the shoulders and their power draw you in so you want to see more. Then you travel a path and if the end of the trail is just like the beginning, it rounds out your journey.

QUALITY

Quality can be seen in many ways. Quality may be in skin and skin texture. The skin should be smooth. The scales should be slightly convex to reflect light outward toward the viewers' lens. If a scale is flat or concave, as in older Koi skin, the skin lacks luster. Quality can be in depth of color. Quality can be in the shine of the skin, which can be attributed to the Guanine in the skin. Quality can be in the softness of a color and how it appears to the eye. Quality can also be in one's mind, from different exposures to Koi over the years. Perception of quality can be just as interesting to study as tangible quality. Females are more valued as Koi get older. This is because the skin tends to maintain this softness and texture longer than the males. Males skin tends to peak at a much earlier age and is shorter lived. Looking at quality and being able to properly value a Koi, as far as price, comes with many years experience. It is a tough concept to learn and to explain. How is a \$15,000 Koi different than a \$30,000 Koi? Some people can't tell and unless you know, there may be no difference. Just a breeder asking too much money for his Koi. The old saying comes to mind when people ask me to explain quality, 'I know it when I see it.'

IMPOSING

APPEARANCE

Most people think that the biggest Koi wins, but that is not always the case. Big does not have anything to do with imposing. Have you ever seen

a long large skinny fish? It is not a pleasant sight. This is where that word 'Power' comes in. It helps to be big to show power, but the body must also be wide and muscular. A fish can be many inches smaller than a larger fish, and still have more power. Power emanates from many things. Most of all it has to do with body conformation. However, as we talked about earlier, pattern can also show power. Any wimpy pattern can spoil it for a large fish. Body proportion can show power. Large pectorals and tail show power. Wide shoulders show power. High body form, at the shoulders, shows power. Thick tail joint shows power. Not only the body, but the way a fish presents itself when swimming is important. It should swim level, not head up or tail up. It should display its fins out, not have them clamped by its sides. It should be saying look at me while you are walking by the tank. So, as you can see, there are many things that can depict power. It does not always have to be the largest fish. One can also see that, with these requirements for power, in the larger sizes, that females will have the edge as far as having more of these attributes. All the Judging standards that are common to all varieties are discussed above. These will be the same things you look for when purchasing and looking at Koi. When purchasing Show Koi, all the five features above should be sought after in one neat package. When buying pond Koi, some of these features will become less important in order to drop the price to a range where you are comfortable. Body is always important and, for viewing, color is always important. These should never be compromised. The other three Judging standards are where things need to drop off to lower the price of a Koi. Hopefully within these shortcomings, you can find a Koi that is still pleasing for you to watch, if you are just interested in pond Koi.

VARIETY

STANDARDS

Now I would like to discuss the Judging standards that are unique to each variety. Most of these differences are in the patterns that are acceptable within the variety. All of the other Judging standards are uniform to all Varieties.

KOHAKU

This is that red pattern on white Koi. The old 'begins and ends' fish. Well, for you Asagi lovers, Kohaku originated out of Asagi back in the early 1800's. The Asagi with red on the sides. As they selected Asagis that the red came on top of and lighter blue patterns, so the Kohaku was born. One

must understand the Kohaku patterns that govern the standard to understand Sanke, Showa, Goshiki, Koromo and other varieties. Many Kohakus are produced by the major breeders. It is the intense competition to produce this variety that drives the interest and the value in this Koi. It is the stepping stone of Koi. Hi on this fish should be of the same intensity and thickness throughout the body. The orange/red base Hi, is more prized than the more purple maroon shade. There should be no white single or double scale windows in the Hi, called mado. Also no lighter orange scales inside the pattern, called kokesuki. It is a two color Koi, so no sumi spots or Shimi should be present. As the Koi moves you should not see white between the edges of the red scales. Sometimes there may be a hikari type sheen on the skin between the scales and this is called fukurin. Fukurin can be very attractive and give the fish a sheen. If there is only select fukurin in some areas, then it can be distracting, almost like separate Gin scales.

The white should be like snow white. Any yellowing of the white is distracting and can be an indication of poor water quality or possibly too much spirulina in the diet. There should be an area of white that separates the Hi pattern from the tail fin. This is called odome. Ideally the pectoral fins are white, but can have a touch of Hi at the base if it is tight to the body and not distracting. This is called motoaka. No sumi in pectorals. The sashi or leading edge of the Hi pattern should be uniform. It can be perfectly separated or it can be slightly blurred if not too much. The area of overlap that we see should be uniform, if present, say one scale wide. It should not distract. Head pattern is important. The Hi on the head should come down far enough on the head to approach the nares or nose holes. It can extend out to the eyes. If it passes or touches the eyes it is better if the eye remains white. If the eyelid is red, the pupil should never be red. If too much red is on the head or covers the whole head, the Koi lacks elegance. If the Hi remains back further on the head than the nares, sometimes a nose Hi can balance that. If Hi extends down the head to the mouth, it is better if the Hi extends to the side a little, to give a color contrast. If the Hi extends straight down the head to the nose it makes the face appear long and pointy. This is called hanatsuki. White on the shoulder is good in the pattern, cutting into the Hi pattern. It better displays the contrast of

the color and creates interest. It is the center of the painting we are creating. Dorsal fins look more elegant if they are cut out in white rather than red. If red extends up to the top of the dorsal it is said to be heavy and less elegant. The tail should be white. Color should be balanced from side to side and front to back. If you are looking to show the Kohaku at a large size, then I would suggest a more wrapping Hi pattern or Makibara. It can give a perception of power and girth. The pattern should be all in large groupings and have no single Hi scales called tobi hi. The power comes from the shoulder area so that is where the largest part of the pattern should be located. This portion of Hi is called the Hiban or Major Hi. For show, do not buy a Doitsu Koi. These are not highly prized, as they lack elegance without a three dimensional edge to the color. As far as pattern, it is said that Koi with bolder, more continuous patterns grow larger as they are closer to the earlier genetics. Koi with step patterns which, for awhile, were more bred for, do not tend to grow as much because of in-breeding. It is believed the more steps a Koi has, the less it grows. At least that is the theory proposed. As a guide, select a fish that is about 70-80% Hi.

SANKE

A Sanke is a Kohaku that has a black pattern on top. Specifically, a Bekko type, black pattern. You must first find a good Kohaku as above, if you disregard the Sumi. Then the sumi has to be added in just the right places. We will discuss the Bekko later, but if you take away the Hi, what is left should be a perfect Bekko.

The Head is very important. It should be the same as the Kohaku head. There should be no black on it. In modern types there has been a tendency to allow some black on the head if it is of high quality. It should just be at the shoulder. If it is on the head, it must not detract from the rest of the pattern and should maintain the balance of color. The first sumi patch from front to back should be on the shoulder. It should be to one side of the shoulder. For this reason it is called Kata-Sumi. Kata means side. This is the center of the picture we are creating and should be a high quality focal point of all three colors. If there is no black until further back on the fish, it looks elongated and out of balance. This shoulder sumi is very important and I will not buy one without it anymore. The rest of the sumi should be in a nice balanced pattern. It needs to be balanced side to side and from front to

back with this Kata-Sumi. We prefer to see the black in the white areas so as not to lessen the effect of the Kohaku. Remember that all begins and ends with Kohaku. The sumi should all be above the lateral line of the fish. It should not wrap the body, which is a characteristic of the Showa. Sanke sumi used to be a more faded sumi, but in modern times the Sanke have been bred back to some Showa and the sumi has increased in quality. It is this same cross-breeding that results in some sumi on the heads of Sanke. The sumi should be either the eggplant bluish, shiny black called Urushi Sumi or it should be black-black called Kuro Sumi. Grey sumi, called Nabe Sumi, is not desired. The black should be even along the whole fish. Hi, as in the Kohaku, should be around 70% of the color and the sumi about 10%. If buying young koi, select a good kohaku with little black. Make sure the black is coming on the shoulder for ultimate balance. As it grows, you can watch the black come up stronger each season. If there is too much black at the beginning, then the fish may be too black to have elegance as it grows. Hi normally finishes before the black. Avoid Sanke with many speckles, stick with defined sumi patches. Pectoral fins should be white or can have some sumi stripes called Tejima. If it has Tejima it should be not more than 3 stripes per pectoral and they should be closely matched. The tail may also have sumi stripes, but a white tail is considered more graceful. All three colors should exist in the region from the back of the dorsal to the tail, which is called the Ozuke region. All in all, the three colors must exist in balance. Balance left to right and front to back. When truly finished, all three colors should be fully developed at the same time. Good Kohaku plus good Bekko equals good Sanke.
(look for part two in our next newsletter)