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*The Newsletter of the
Pikes Peak Koi and Water Garden Society
Colorado Springs, Colorado*

A Peak at Ponds

May 2026

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Club Calendar & News

Join Us May 14th, 2026 for our 3rd [PPKWGS Club Meeting](#)

Tom and Jacob Taylor from Crystal Ponds
will be sharing their knowledge with us about pond plants.



Crystal Ponds LLC.
What's In Your Water?

Aquatic Plants for Every Pond and Koi Hobbyist

Thu, Apr 9, 2026 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

The church is located at 1080 E La Salle St, Colorado Springs, CO 80907.

PPKWGS 2026 Plant Sale

Get ready—one of our biggest events of the year is almost here!

Mark your calendars for **May 30th**, when our much-anticipated Plant Sale returns, once again hosted by Bob Oatman, this year's Plant Sale Coordinator.

This isn't just any sale—it's our club's major fundraiser. Every year, plant lovers from across the city flock to this event. They come for the greenery, but many leave inspired to become part of our growing community.

As you freshen up your pond for summer and start thinning your plants, don't toss those extra clippings—turn them into something meaningful! Donate what you can during our May 28th [Plant Sale Workshop](#), whether it's a handful or just a few sprigs. Even small contributions—like cuttings from your Plantains or Marsh Marigolds—help our club flourish and bring in vital support.



President's Ponderings

This season has unfolded in curious contrasts. An unseasonably warm, dry winter slipped seamlessly into an equally mild early spring, coaxing both plants and pond life into an early, exuberant awakening. By early April, marsh marigolds shimmered in bloom, the apple tree stood proudly adorned in blossoms, and crocuses dotted the flower bed in full bloom. Then came the sharp reversal—a hard freeze on the 17th, plunging temperatures to 13 degrees and leaving much of that early vitality battered.

The damage to trees and plantings has been significant, and with such persistent dryness, I find myself especially concerned for the lawn. For now, we wait and watch, hopeful for resilience. Luckily, my fish seem unfazed.



I hope you found our last club meeting as engaging as it was informative. My apologies for the late hour—two exceptional speakers, each brimming with valuable insights, combined with a lively round of questions, made for a program that simply could not be rushed. While we were unable to share the PowerPoint presentations on the website, our secretary, Brenda Walth, graciously stepped in to capture the essence of the evening. Her detailed notes are now available in the Members Area under Club Meeting Minutes, and I encourage you to take a look.

Though it may seem a bit early, I invite you to begin considering participation in our 37th Annual Pond Tour. This signature event is the highlight of the year for PPKWGS—a celebration of creativity, dedication, and the serene beauty our members cultivate in their own backyards. It offers a unique opportunity to share your personal oasis with fellow enthusiasts and the broader community, while also helping to grow and strengthen our club. Yes, it requires effort, but it is equally rewarding and deeply affirming.

On a related note, several members have expressed interest in showcasing their ponds in a more intimate setting—one limited to fellow members rather than the general public. In response, the board has begun exploring the possibility of a smaller, members-only tour. Our goal is to create additional opportunities for connection without detracting from participation in our annual public tour, which already sometimes struggles to attract a strong showing of host ponds.

We would greatly value your perspective on this idea. Please feel free to share your thoughts with me via email as we consider whether to move forward with offering this second, more private tour option.

Bob Oatman

PPKWGS President

President@ppwgs.org

Group Koi Food Buy Results

Thanks to Phil Goulding, our club saved our members hundreds of dollars on food for their Koi babies. This year we sold 1,958 lbs. of food for \$5,430.37, and had a profit of \$117.06. This tiny profit is perfect! We do this as a membership benefit, not as a fundraiser.

Thanks to Everyone Who Helped Out with the Union Printers Spring Workshop

As we kept an eye on Saturday's forecast, we made plans to divide and fertilize the lilies at the Union Printer Home pond. The morning greeted us with a chill and a brisk wind, but before long, Mother Nature showed her kindness, and it turned into a truly pleasant morning.

We were grateful for such a wonderful turnout—everyone put on their gloves and worked together with enthusiasm to get the job done. Your time, energy, and willingness to help made all the difference, and it was inspiring to see such a strong sense of community in action.

Thank you to everyone who contributed. Below is a list of our volunteers. I know it may not be complete, as I didn't catch every name—my sincere apologies for any omissions. Please email me if I missed your name – Bob Oatman President@ppwgs.org

Miriam Blum, Cathy Bulf, Allen & Linda Burbidge, Tony D'Amico, Bill and Dolora Griesinger, Carol Hildebrand, Tim Jardeleza, Peter Meinig, Rebecca Murphy, Bob Oatman, Devon Phelan, Alan & Robin Rainville, Harry Riemer, Scott Snyder, and Tom Taylor



Volunteer Opportunity!!!

Humane Society Spring Workshop

We still have one more spring workshop to complete this year. It's to clean up the pond and repot several more lilies at the Humane Society's beautiful pond.

This workshop will be held on May 16th at 9:00 am.

Come and give us a hand in keeping this area clean and attractive so the Humane Society dogs have a wonderful place to stretch their legs.

Log in and sign up at the bottom of our May 16th [calendar page](#), because even though this workshop is scheduled for May, this is Colorado!

In case Mother Nature throws a last-minute snowstorm at us, we want to be able to contact you if we have to cancel and reschedule.



How does barley straw prevent algae blooms?

Have you tried using barley straw to “naturally” control algae blooms in your pond? Did it work, or did it seem to be a waste of money?

I found the following article written by Syd Mitchell of K.O.I. and found it very interesting. I have been told that barley straw will not help clear an algae bloom, and it will not kill string algae that is already growing, but I never knew why. This article may be a bit difficult to understand, but it answers why adding barley straw to your pond may be help.

There are conflicting reports about the efficacy of barley straw as an algaecide, some say it works, others disagree and in the absence of a definitive answer this is why I believe it can help prevent algae blooms.

Barley straw, wheat straw and ordinary hay contain soluble compounds such as carbohydrates and celluloses. Barley has the most and that's why it is most often used.

When barley straw is placed in water, heterotrophic bacteria begin to break it down and will initially be the dominant species in the decomposition process. As these bacteria metabolise the carbon they need from the walls of the cells in the straw, a compound called lignin is released. Small numbers of micro fungi that were present on the straw then begin to break this down too. They proliferate and take over as the dominant species. The products of all this activity are humic acid and some enzymes called peroxidases. If these are exposed to oxygen, as in a well aerated pond, they form a very weak solution of hydrogen peroxide.

This form of hydrogen peroxide is far too weak to affect fully developed algal cells so hence the negative story that these products won't cure an algal bloom. This makes perfect sense to me because it's far too weak to have a detrimental effect on fully formed “adult” algae cells but it is concentrated enough to have a detrimental effect on “new born” cells by puncturing the new thin polysaccharide cell walls so that they lyse, which can roughly be thought of as the “algae juice” leaking out and the cell bleeding to death.

To me, this would explain why some say these products don't work and some say they do. If they are used in a highly aerated pond just before an algal bloom would have started then there is a good chance that it won't happen. If they are used after the algae have started to proliferate or in a pond that isn't at oxygen saturation then they will fail.

Another reason for failure, as with any treatment, may be due to it not having been used at a sufficient concentration. In the absence of any data from properly conducted trials, approximate calculations indicate that the minimum quantity to use in a koi pond is 34 gm per 1,000 gallons with an optimum amount of around three times that, i.e. 100 gm per 1,000 gallons. There is no upper limit to the amount that can be used other than a common sense approach. The decomposition of any organic material in a pond is aerobic and therefore takes oxygen out of the system. The oxygen demand at a rate of 100 gm per 1,000 gallons will not be great and will be well within the capability of a normal koi pond but significantly greater quantities will make a significantly greater demand and should only be used if the water is being highly aerated.

By Syd Mitchell

(Article Continued Next Page)

(Continued from prior page.)

So here are my takeaways.

Barley Straw must be added to your water well in advance of any algae bloom because it needs time to decompose and release the chemicals that then combine with oxygen to create a weak solution of hydrogen peroxide.

Adding barley straw may help reduce floating algae and string algae, but it only kills the newly forming cells, not the mature ones. So, it is a proactive additive, not a reactive one.

The decomposing straw will pull oxygen out of the water, so only use it if your pond is well oxygenated.

The optimum quantity to use is 100 gm per 1000 gallons. (about 3.5 oz)

Adding more than 3.5 oz / 1000 gallons is ok ONLY if you have lots of aeration.

I love understanding the “why and how” in ponding.

Bob Oatman

Save the Date!

PPKWGS Koi Rehoming Auction

Saturday, June 27th, 2026

at Phelan Gardens

Summer is almost here, and the club is preparing for the annual PPKWGS Rehoming Auction! This is a great time for members to find koi and goldfish, rehome fish to adjust the fish load, or just experience the fun of this event.

In order to ensure everything goes swimmingly, we need to start gathering information and resources now. Some things we need to know:

1. Who has fish for the auction?
How many, how big, do you need Club assistance to catch and transport?
2. Who can volunteer to help on auction day?
Set up, cashiers, bag 'n tag, break down, etc.

Anyone who has koi for the auction, please [Click Here](#) for more detailed information and contact Cathy or Nicholas no later than June 19th.

Cathy Bulf: 719-440-9906 cathybulf@yahoo.com

Nicholas Simco: 719-244-2655 nicsimco@gmail.com

PPKWGS Important Dates for 2026

Board Meetings are held on the Thursday after club meetings.
You are welcome to join us. Ask any board member for more information.

Special Dates are highlighted and linked to the website

[14 May - 3rd Club Meeting](#)

[16 May - Humane Society Spring Workshop](#)

[28 May - Plant Sale Workshop](#)

[30 May - Plant Sale](#)

[11 June - 4th Club Meeting](#)

[27 June - Koi Re-Homing Auction](#)

[09 July - 5th Club Meeting - Koi Auction and Pizza Party \(6:30PM start time\)](#)

[01-02 Aug - 37th Annual Pond Tour](#)

[13 Aug - 6th Club Meeting](#)

[22 Aug - Evening Soiree](#)

[29 Aug - Union Printer Home Fall Workshop](#)

[10 Sept - 7th Club Meeting](#)

[26 Sept Humane Society Fall Workshop](#)

[08 Oct - 8th & Final Club Meeting - Annual BBQ \(6:30PM start time\)](#)

Board Meetings are held virtually on Thursdays, one week after the regular monthly meeting.

Everyone is welcome at the board meetings. Ask a board member for more information.

Highlighted Plant of the Month



Water Hawthorne

Aponogeton Distachyos Hardy Marginal

White Floating oval, olive green leaves can occasionally be splashed with maroon or deep purple.

Wonderful vanilla scented white flowers float on the water or are held just above.

Blooms spring and fall. Three to eight inches of water over the soil.

Club News

Discover the Convenience of Our Club-Owned Oase PondoVac 5's



As proud owners of two of these powerful pond vacuums, we're excited to offer them exclusively to our paid club members. If you're planning to clean out your pond and don't have your own pond vac, worry not! Borrow ours, and simplify your pond maintenance. These professional-grade vacuums make the task a breeze.

Do you need a pond vac to help clean out your pond? We have an Oase PondoVac 5 you can borrow for free. To reserve it, reach out to Allen Burbidge at (719) 574-5176.

Website Spotlight

The Member Chat is back! After being offline for several years, our website's Member Chat area is now up and running again. Jump in to start a conversation, reconnect with others, or explore existing discussions—just head over to the Member Chats in the Members Area dropdown and join the conversation.

**Here it comes...Walking down the street...Getting the funniest looks from...
Everyone it meets..**

Hey Hey it's the Plant Sale!

It's already April, and it is certain that some or most of us already have plants starting to grow in our ponds. It's never too early to start thinking about how you can help out PPKWGS with one of the biggest fundraisers of the year.

While you're monkeying around in your pond, finding some plants to divide and other to trim, please consider saving those discards or extra plants and donate them to our plant sale.

Also, it's a lot of fun to help run the sale. You get to wear the cool green volunteer vests, there are donuts in the morning, and you get first viewing of all the plants for sale! [Sign Up for this Event.](#)



Where do koi keep their money?

In the *river bank.*





New Membership Applications and Membership Dues can be submitted via our website at PPKWGS.ORG . Or, you can fill out the Application/Renewal form below and mail it and your payment to the address listed.

Memberships are considered inactive if dues are not paid by May of the current year. (Remember, if you purchased your membership after the pond tour, your membership includes the rest of that year and all of the next year.)

We are meeting in person again, so it should be a great year. Please continue supporting your club by continuing to pay your membership dues.

**Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society
2026 Membership Application / Renewal**

- DATE _____ RENEWAL _____ NEW _____ (Please write legibly)
- NAME _____ NAME _____
- EMAIL _____ EMAIL _____
- HOME PHONE (____) _____ HOME PHONE (____) _____
- MOBILE PHONE (____) _____ MOBILE PHONE (____) _____
- MAILING ADDRESS _____
- CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
- LIST PROGRAMS that would be of interest to you _____
- YES! I would like to help with PLANT SALE _____ POND TOUR _____ TOUR EXHIBITOR _____
 CLUB MEETINGS _____ WORKSHOPS _____ OTHER _____
- ANNUAL DUES INDIVIDUAL \$10 _____ FAMILY \$15 _____
- PAY TO: PIKES PEAK KOI & WATER GARDEN SOCIETY
- **MAIL TO:** PPKWGS Membership - c/o Allen Burbidge, 4314 Meadowview Court, Colorado Springs, CO 80918
- Phone: 719-574-5176 Email: membership@ppkwgs.org WEB: www.ppkwgs.org
- For PPWGS Use: Cash \$ _____ Check \$ _____ # _____ Membership # _____ Card Y N

Peak at Ponds

Is published monthly during the summer months and is the official newsletter of the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society (PPKWGS)

PPKWGS Board of Directors for 2026

President:

Bob Oatman

President@ppwgs.org**Vice President:**

Cathy Bulf

VicePresident@ppwgs.org**Treasurer:**

Phil Goulding

Treasurer@ppwgs.org**Secretary:**

Brenda Walth

Secretary@ppwgs.org**Member at Large:**

Allen Burbidge

Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org

Ellen Simco

Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org

Nicholas Simco

Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org

Robin Robbins

Memberatlarge@ppwgs.org

PPKWGS Coordinators

Fund Raiser:

Allen Burbidge

Refreshments:

Robin Robbins

Membership:

Allen Burbidge

Door Prizes:

Allen & Linda Burbidge

Koi Food Buy:

Phil Goulding

Rehoming Auction:

Cathy Bluff

Plant Sale:

Bob Oatman

Koi Auction:

TBD

Pond Tour:

Allen Burbidge

Webmaster:

Bob Oatman

Newsletter Editor

Rachel Lentz

Social Media Coordinator: Jonah Macaspac

Peak at Ponds Submissions

The deadline for contributions to the Newsletter is the **20th day of the month prior** to distribution. Please submit all articles for publication in the newsletter via email to:

editor@ppwgs.org

Your contributions are always welcome and encouraged. Editing of your submission may occur as content is reviewed and as space permits.



From the Editor

Happy Spring Everyone!

Or at least I think it's Spring. It might be winter. Or summer. I'm not 100% sure, with all this crazy weather we've been having. My koi have come out and gone back into torpor. The algae has started growing, then died off, and then started growing again. The unpredictability has actually been causing me some worry about the health of my pond and koi, but so far, everything seems to be doing well. (famous last words, I know!)

I started the Koi Keeper Certification course that is offered by K.O.I. International. It's been so interesting! So much information on so many topics. I've taken the tests for the first two chapters—*anatomy and physiology*—and passed them both. There's a lot of reading and highlighting happening, but overall, the information is so cool. I'm really glad to be taking this, as it has already provided interesting trivia (I hadn't known the koi "noses" are called nares!) as well as useful information on planning out how to construct the pond we are going to be building in our new house when we move later on this year. I highly recommend this course to anyone interested in being a more proficient koi owner. And with the scholarship opportunity, the course can ultimately be taken for free!

Hopefully, everyone has been able to successfully navigate the weather challenges, and everyone's koi, goldfish, turtles, and whatever else is living in and around the pond (except maybe for the snails in BillieJo's pond. Those guys are no joke!) have been able to survive the changes. Turning on and off the waterfalls, or leaving them on and just hoping for the best...these are the challenges we all face here in the Front Range. Fortunately for all of us, we have so much koi wisdom in the club that we can pull from. This definitely puts us at an advantage against the trials of Mother Nature this spring.

So, best of wishes to everyone. Ask questions, make adjustments, and keep your ponds as healthy and hale as possible! See you soon. -Rachel