

To ensure delivery of PPKWGS emails,
please add the domain @MG.PPKWGS.org to your Safe Senders List.



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

A Peak at Ponds

August 2026

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's ponderings
Koi Auction Review
Pond Construction Types
Newsletter Editor Change
Interesting Tidbits
Pond Tour Reminder
Club Calendar & News
Plant of the Month
Club Calendar & News
Editor's Note

Please come join us for our 6th PPKWGS Club Meeting of 2026.

POND PROBLEMS!!!

We will be covering many of the common problems pond owners face.



Bring your problems and we'll try to find an answer, or if you have it figured out, come and share your hard earned knowledge with the rest of us.

President's Ponderings

Every Pond Tells a Story

As our 37th Annual Pond Tour begins, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who helped make this year's event a reality. From our pond exhibitors who graciously opened their backyards to the volunteers who greeted visitors, answered questions, and kept everything running smoothly, this event simply would not happen without you. Every person who contributed, no matter how large or small the role, helped showcase what makes the Pikes Peak Koi & Water Garden Society such a special organization.



It's easy to walk around a beautiful pond and admire the crystal-clear water, colorful koi, lush plants, and peaceful waterfalls. Visitors often comment on how relaxing and effortless everything appears. But as pond keepers, we know the truth. Behind every beautiful pond is a story filled with planning, hard work, problem-solving, and a willingness to keep learning.

Very few ponds begin exactly as they appear today. Most have evolved over many years. A small water feature grows into a larger pond. A simple filter is upgraded as experience grows. Plants are moved, waterfalls are rebuilt, and countless hours are spent improving the balance between nature and technology. Every challenge teaches us something new, and every improvement becomes another chapter in the story.

The fish themselves tell stories as well. Many of our koi have been with us for years, growing from tiny juveniles into impressive adults. Some were carefully selected from dealers, while others found new homes through our own Koi Rehoming Auction. Each fish has become part of the family, and caring for them reminds us that this hobby is built on long-term commitment, patience, and stewardship.

One of my favorite parts of the Pond Tour is watching conversations unfold. Experienced hobbyists exchange ideas about filtration, water quality, and construction techniques. First-time visitors discover that building a pond may be more achievable than they imagined. Children stop to feed koi and suddenly become fascinated by aquatic life. Questions are answered, friendships begin, and knowledge is shared freely. That willingness to help one another has always been one of the greatest strengths of our club.

The Pond Tour is far more than an opportunity to admire beautiful landscapes. It is our chance to inspire future pond keepers, encourage new members, and demonstrate what can be accomplished through dedication and a passion for the hobby. Every exhibitor who opens their gate helps ensure that our hobby continues to grow for the next generation.

I also hope our members leave the tour with a few new ideas of their own. Even after many years in this hobby, I still find myself noticing a new filtration system, a different way to create a stream, hide plumbing, or arrange aquatic plants. There is always something new to learn because no two ponds are ever exactly alike. That's one of the things that keeps this hobby exciting.

As we move through the remainder of summer, let's remember that our ponds are never truly

(continued next page)

finished. They continue to evolve just as we do. Each season teaches us something new, each challenge makes us better pond keepers, and each improvement adds another chapter to our own pond's story.

Thank you once again to every exhibitor, volunteer, sponsor, and visitor who helped make this year's Pond Tour a memorable success. Whether you hosted hundreds of guests, volunteered for a few hours, or simply came to learn and enjoy the beauty of the ponds, you played an important part in our story.

Every pond has a story. Behind every waterfall is a lesson learned, every healthy koi represents years of care, and every beautiful landscape began as someone's dream—and probably a shovel full of dirt.

Until next month, enjoy your ponds, enjoy your koi, and remember that the best stories are still being written—one pond at a time.

Bob Oatman

PPKWGS President

President@ppwgs.org

Another Fantastic Koi Auction & Pizza Party!



Our July 9th Koi Auction & Pizza Party was another huge success! We had a terrific turnout, and the excitement in the room was contagious as members bid on beautiful koi looking for new ponds to call home. By the end of the evening, 15 lucky koi had found new homes, and judging by the smiles on everyone's faces, both the fish and their new owners were winners!

Of course, no PPKWGS gathering would be complete without great food and even better fellowship. An incredible 16 pizzas disappeared as members visited, shared pond stories, and enjoyed a fun evening together. Thanks to everyone's enthusiasm and generosity, the event also raised \$483 for the club, helping support future meetings, educational programs, and events.

A big thank you to Phil Goulding for being our auctioneer, Crystal Ponds for supplying the Koi, Tim Jardeleza for coordinating the event, all the setup helpers, and the bidders for making this a memorable evening. We can't wait to do it again next year!

Koi Can Live for Decades

Many people are surprised to learn that well-cared-for koi commonly live 25–40 years, and some have exceeded 70 years. In Japan, a few documented koi have lived well over a century, although those ages are exceptional.



Pond Construction Types

Submitted by Mike Anger to K.O.I. on 05APR2015

Pond building is a project most of us will undertake at some point as we continue to raise Koi. Many of us first started with the introduction of a water feature, added plants, perhaps some goldfish and then Koi. A few of us bought a house where the prior owner had some type of pond or fountain, and we too evolved into having a Koi pond. Whatever way you arrived here, we all wrestled with similar questions: how large, how much to spend what kind of filters, and what do we make it out of.

The simplest ponds are made of preformed polyethylene. The corners are already rounded, the bottoms sloped, bottom drains are already in place and all that's needed is its installation, a waterfall and water. Its disadvantages are its fixed shape and size, and the risk of pH crash as this material is inert (if the entire pond, return and waterfall are made of the same material). While it may seem to be a simple option, the preformed ponds are very hard to get level while also being well supported. Another problem are the plant shelves, which make perfect places for Herons and other predators to wade and kill your Koi.

Another easier pond to build is a liner pond. Here you have fairly low cost, as well as shape and size flexibility. It can suffer from leaks from plumbing fixtures through it, and tears or punctures. It may wrinkle and fold, interfering with water circulation and catching and trapping detritus, and it is difficult to hide the liner that extends above the water line. Like polyethylene, may result in pH crash. Do not build plant shelves when designing a liner pond, again because it will encourage predators. Sides should be basically vertical, and ideally, all Koi ponds should be 2 feet deeper than the deepest frost depth in your area.

Fiberglass has the advantages of flexibility of size and shape, smooth corners with no folds or wrinkles. It has few problems with leaks, is very durable and can be remodeled. It can be quite expensive, may leach some chemicals that are harmful to Koi if the resin is not fully cured, and it too is at risk for pH crash.

Concrete ponds tend to be very popular. They are quite durable and can be in any size or shape. They do take a bit of planning (and expense). They require rebar for support and strength. Once installed, concrete must "cure." This process strengthens the concrete reducing the chances of cracks and leaks. Compounds that leach out of concrete will raise the pH to lethal levels, unless the pond is cured. Curing requires adding water and muriatic acid. Some opt for a liner or spray-on lining over their concrete. Of course, the advantage of properly cured concrete is that the pond may never be prone to a pH crash, and will also have sufficient alkalinity to insure healthy fish and filters.

Ponds produced out of cinderblock or bricks need a plaster coat or some other type of waterproofing material. Any type of masonry pond that needs a final plaster coat must have it done all at once. This is because in order for it to be waterproof, all edges of that plaster have to cure at the same time.

When planning on building a pond, whether your first or last, carefully weigh the pros and cons of each type of construction, utilize the expertise of K.O.I., and consider taking the Pond Construction course #202 BEFORE you build. Spending time to learn in advance will save time and money, and help you to get exactly the pond that you desire.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Rachel Lentz

For the past four years, Rachel Lentz has been the creative force behind our club newsletter, and we simply can't thank her enough. Month after month, she's put together newsletters that have kept us informed, reminded us of upcoming events, and helped bring our club a little closer together. Her time, talent, and dedication have made a real difference, and we have truly appreciated everything she's done for PPKWGS.

Rachel and her family will soon be moving to Divide, and with the distance, she won't be able to attend many of our meetings and events. Because of that, she's decided it's time to pass the newsletter on to someone who can stay closely connected with the club. While we're certainly going to miss having Rachel as our Newsletter Editor, we're excited for her new adventure and wish her all the best. Thank you, Rachel, for four wonderful years of helping tell the story of our club!

Now we're looking for someone to step into this important role. If you've ever thought about getting more involved with the club, this is a great opportunity. Don't worry if you've never put together a newsletter before—Rachel has graciously offered to help the new editor get started and make the transition as smooth as possible. If you're interested or would like to learn more, please contact Bob Oatman. We'd love to have you on the team!

Interesting Tidbits

Water Is Heavier Than Most People Think

A typical 2,000-gallon pond contains over 16,000 pounds (8 tons) of water. That enormous mass is one reason proper construction and planning are so important.

The Waterfall Does More Than Look Pretty. Besides creating relaxing sounds, a waterfall:

- Adds oxygen to the water
- Helps remove dissolved gases
- Improves water circulation
- Benefits the bacteria that keep the pond healthy

It's one of the hardest-working pieces of equipment on a pond.

Fish Know Their Owners

Koi are remarkably intelligent for fish. Many learn to recognize the person who feeds them and will swim to the edge of the pond when they see a familiar face. Some will even allow gentle hand feeding or petting.

Plants Are Natural Filters. Water lilies, marginal plants, and floating plants don't just make a pond beautiful. They also help in the following ways:

- Consume nutrients that algae would otherwise use
- Provide shade
- Offer shelter for fish
- Help stabilize water quality

Nature is often the best filtration partner.

(continued next page)

Every Pond Is Its Own Ecosystem.

Even a small backyard pond contains dozens—or hundreds—of living organisms: beneficial bacteria, microscopic algae, zooplankton, insects, frogs, birds, fish, and aquatic plants. A healthy pond is a balanced ecosystem, not just a decorative water feature.

Clear Water Doesn't Always Mean Healthy Water

A pond can look crystal clear while having poor water chemistry. Regular testing for ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, pH, and KH tells you much more than appearance alone.

Bigger Ponds Are Often Easier

This surprises many newcomers. Larger ponds usually have more stable temperatures and water chemistry, making them more forgiving than very small ponds.

Koi Continue Growing

Unlike many pets, koi continue to grow throughout much of their lives. Their final size depends on genetics, nutrition, water quality, and space.

By the time you read this, it may already be too late!

If it's not too late, though, you're in luck. Too late for what, you might be asking. In luck for what, you might be asking? Well, those are two darned good questions. And here's your answer, free of charge...

It's August and therefore it's time for the 37th annual PPKWGS Pond Tour! If you are reading this newsletter when it's hot off the presses, you are lucky enough to benefit from this kindly reminder to take notes! Snap pics! Sketch little drawings on the back of your most recent grocery list! Do whatever floats your boat in order to be prepared for next month's PPKWGS Newsletter's Pond Tour Scavenger Hunt!

I know, many have taken the challenge, and many have valiantly struggled to recall which cute lawn decorations were located in which pond tour member's yard, which notable fish lived in which pond tour member's pond, which gorgeous arial view belonged to which pond tour member's glorious home. The pressure is great and the stakes are high in this fast paced battle of memory and recall! (Well, not really. It's just a fun little game and a way to highlight the efforts and successes of the folks who shared their ponds and homes in the Pond Tour. But I really do like a little drama from time to time!)

This year, don't be caught unprepared! Download the Pond Tour Maps [here](#), and take your time at each pond. Ask questions, attend to the details, look for the unique and interesting aspects of each pond. There is something singular, pleasant, pretty, surprising, and/or humorous at every single pond, and these features will be highlighted in the next newsletter. And you, dear friends, will be able to win bragging rights for if you can pass the Scavenger Hunt with a perfect score of 8!

I hope you have a great time on the tour, or you had a great time on the tour, or you had a lovely weekend doing totally not Pond Tour related activities.

Good Luck, God Speed, and try not to trip into any ponds!

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

[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.

Print out this page and post it somewhere so you can keep track of our events!
(Paid members will receive a personal, pre-printed copy of this in the mail)

And don't forget to bring your Name Tag or use a Name Tag Sticker offered by the club when you come to the next club meeting. It helps to get to know one another when your name is right there!

Highlighted Plant of the Month



Variegated Giant Reed—*Arundo donax* 'Variegata'

A tall, striking ornamental grass featuring green and creamy white striped leaves and thick bamboo-like stems. This marginal reed is fast growing and grows in clumps.

Direct sun to medium shade. Spreads to at least 2 feet and can grow between 8 and 20 feet tall.

Submerge 2" below water line. Rhizomes.

Hardy in zones 7-10.

Club News



Discover the Convenience of 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 paid members can borrow for free.

To reserve it, reach out to Allen Burbidge at (719) 574-5176.

Website Spotlight

Did you enjoy the pond tour and now have the desire to see even more ponds?

We are here to help.

You can view hundreds of ponds in our Member Ponds directory.

Just log in and click Members Area > Member Ponds

Or

Log in and click Members Area > Club Photo Gallery. Here you can view ponds from our pond tours since 2001.



Crystal Ponds, LLC.

Your one stop source for everything that the Water Gardener and Koi Pond enthusiast needs:

Aquatic Plants • Koi • Supplies
Equipment • Maintenance • Installation

1430 S. 21st Street
Colorado Springs, CO
(719) 424-9810 • (719) 444-8844

Please call to confirm open hours.
Appointments always available.
Active PPKWGS members receive 5% discount.





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:

Brenda Walth

Treasurer@ppwgs.org

Secretary:

tbd

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:

Tim Jardeleza

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

Hello, friends! How are you all doing? Enjoying your summer, I hope.

We have been busy with the myriad of decisions required for building a new house, which is both exciting and overwhelming, and designing the new koi pond inside the dome greenhouse, which is also exciting and overwhelming. As any of you who have done this yourselves know, there are so many decision points. And it feels like a lot of pressure to make the right choice, since it would be pretty tough to go back and change it once it's in place and operational.

But there are so many pond-building experts in this club, the K.O.I. certification program has chapters on pond design, and I was able to include an article in this month's newsletter that addresses this very issue. I hope it's helpful to those of you thinking through your own koi pond build.

I also hope to get a few ideas from the Pond Tour this weekend. It's such a treat to be able to get back into people's yards and spend time looking, asking questions, taking photos of all the creative endeavors people have put so much effort and time into. If anyone has any pictures of the tour, they are welcome to send them in, and we can include them in the September newsletter or the website's member photo album.

Also, Bob wrote up an announcement that the position of newsletter editor is up for grabs. I am moving to Divide (Florissant, actually, but it's right on the border of the two cities and Divide has a closer stop light than Florissant.) It's going to be such a wonderful move for us, but I also don't know how much time I'm going to be able to devote to the newsletter. I would hate for the quality to slip if I don't have enough time to devote to it. So if you have ever thought about organizing the newsletter, step up and let me or Bob know. It's not hard (Bob really does most of the work!) and it's really a lot of fun.

In any case, best wishes to you and yours! Happy Pond Touring!
-Rachel