

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 74

Goldfish for Ponds

Goldfish in General

Wild fish are not suitable for the garden pond. Some are predators and can harm other fish; others are bottom feeders and tend to stir up the bottom, keeping the water murky.

Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) are the best fish for a water garden. These fish are well suited for almost any pond size. The unfortunate reputation that follows goldfish is that they die in two days. Even in a small bowl (although not recommended because of limited surface area), goldfish, if cared for, can live for many years.

Wild fish are not suitable for the garden pond. Some are predators and can harm other fish; others are bottom feeders and tend to stir up the bottom, keeping the water murky.

Through selective breeding over the centuries, goldfish can now be found in many varieties and colors. The list can extend into hundreds of individual varieties; below are some of the most common.

Koi

Koi are the most spectacular ornamental pond fish to add to a garden pond. Large and beautiful, koi can also be tamed to eat from a person's hand. They are not suitable for very small ponds (they must have at least 200 gallons of pond water per fish) and must have adequate pond filtration. Koi can live a very long time (40 years or more) if the right environment is provided.

Orfe

Another type of goldfish, orfe are sociable fish and should always be kept in schools of

at least three. Orfe are fast swimmers and need a lot of oxygen; consequently, they spend most of the time near the surface of the pond. They will jump out of very small ponds because they like lots of room to play and they love to catch bugs. We recommend at least a 500-gallon pond for these fish.

Comet Goldfish

Smaller than the orfe, comet goldfish are the staple of garden ponds. They adapt readily to a wide range of conditions, are bright and colorful, and breed readily. Comet goldfish are suitable for all but the smallest of barrel gardens. Many varieties are available, some of the more popular being oranda, lionhead, ranchu, shubunkin, and fantail

Water

All of these pond fish are cold-water varieties and can remain in the pond during the winter with proper preparation as long as the pond is deep and large enough and care is taken that it does not freeze completely.

Feeding

Pond fish should be fed suitable food to ensure healthy fish and a stable environment in the pond. Make sure that low-quality pond food isn't fed to the fishes, though, because this will produce more waste and will pollute the pond. The fish will also feed on mosquito larvae and any other insect that is in the pond.

Goldfish food can be purchased at any garden centre or pet store in your area.

Zach Blay, Class of 2005

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery

Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus, 135 Taylor Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
phone: (905) 641-2252, ext. 4082; fax: (905) 988-4307 e-mail: mnewell@niagaracollege.ca
Website: <http://greenhousenursery.niagaracollege.ca>