

Flora & Fauna

Starting a Koi Pond

There is just something so peaceful and relaxing about watching large, colorful koi lazily swimming in a pond. Koi are exotic and beautiful members of the carp family that have been bred for their brilliant hues by the Japanese since the early 1800s. In addition to being known for their vibrant colors, koi are also known for their long lives. The average lifespan is around 25-35 years, but some can live for a century or more (226 years is the record!).

If you're looking to add a stunning feature to your backyard, consider installing a koi pond.

Here's what the koi will need:

1. **Lots of water.** The ideal setup for koi is a pond of at least 1,000 gallons (at least 3-4 feet deep) with a smooth gravel substrate, rocks, and hearty plants.
2. **Cold protection.** Koi are moderately cold tolerant, and were originally bred to survive the brief, cold winters of Japan. Koi can remain outdoors so long as the pond does not freeze too deep. A 6-8 inch thick ice cover over a 3-4 foot pond is acceptable so long as a substantial area of surface water is open at all times to allow for gas exchange. A bubbler will help circulate the water and may prevent freezing in cool climates. For colder regions, however, a de-icer will be needed.
3. **Care and companionship.** Koi are not like the goldfish won at the county fair. They can live for decades and require a long-term commitment (if you plan on moving frequently or in the near future, koi may not be the right choice for you). In time, koi will even come to recognize you, the food provider. They prefer the company of other koi and will swim together in formation.
4. **Filtration.** A waterfall or fountain will help keep the water oxygenated, but substantial mechanical and biological filtration will be necessary to remove waste and provide proper water conditions.
5. **Healthy Diet.** Check with your local pet store to find a good quality pellet or flake food specifically designed for koi. A balanced diet will have a significant impact on the appearance and health of your fish.
6. **Protection from Predators.** The brilliant colors and large size of koi make them easy prey for predators such as large birds or mammals. Netting, fencing, and even motion detectors that squirt water provide essential protection.

If you think a pond with koi (or any other type of hearty fish) would make a great addition to your backyard landscape, pay a visit to a pet store, aquarium shop, or pond specialist to get started. These professionals will help you find the right pond and fish to fit your backyard. By starting with the right setup, you'll enjoy your koi for years to come!

GUARANTEE SYSTEM.

1518 Steele Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Phone: 616-451-0787
www.guaranteesystem.com

Cleaning Corner:

Six Helpful Uses for Baking Soda

1. **Laundry Brightener.** Add 1 cup of baking soda to a load of laundry to really brighten your whites and brights.
2. **Stainless Steel Surface Cleaner.** Sprinkle a little baking soda on a sponge and use it to get your stainless steel appliances spotless and scratch-free.
3. **Scuff and Crayon Remover.** Mix a little baking soda and water together to create a paste that will gently scrub away scuffs and crayon marks from walls.
4. **Shampoo Booster.** Add a little baking soda to your shampoo to remove buildup and improve manageability.
5. **Odor Remover.** Sprinkle some baking soda in your recycling bin or trash can to help control strong odor. Periodically, use baking soda and a damp sponge to scrub the container and keep it clean and smelling fresh.
6. **Teapot Cleaner.** Remove brown stains from your teapot or cups by soaking them overnight in a mixture of 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 quart of warm water.

June

- 1630 The fork is introduced to American dining by Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts. Previously, Americans used a knife, a spoon, and their fingers to eat
- 1667 The first human blood transfusion is administered by Dr. Jean-Baptiste Denys in France
- 1926 Norma Jeane Baker, also known as Marilyn Monroe, is born in Los Angeles, California
- 1864 Arlington National Cemetery is established
- 1953 The first Chevrolet Corvette rolls off the assembly line in Flint, Michigan
- 1997 Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, the first book in J.K. Rowling's wildly successful 7-book series is published by Bloomsbury in London
- 2009 Michael Jackson, also known as the "King of Pop," dies at the age of 50

Health Advice: Gluten, Wheat, and Celiac Disease

You've probably heard people talking about gluten on the news, or perhaps you've seen terms like "gluten free" or "wheat free" on products in the local supermarket. For anyone not affected with gluten or wheat sensitivities, these terms can seem strange, and the idea of living without grains – crackers, bread, pasta, etc. – can seem even stranger. Here is some information on what these terms mean and why they're important to certain individuals.

What is "gluten"?

Gluten is composed of the proteins glutenin and gliadin. They exist in grass-like grains such as wheat, barley, rye, and spelt. These grains are commonly used in bread, pasta, and cereals.

What is celiac disease?

Celiac disease, also known as gluten intolerance, occurs when the proteins in gluten trigger the immune system to overreact with strong and unusual antibodies. Over time, these antibodies wear down the little hairs called villi, which line the walls of the intestine. These hairs grab and absorb nutrients as food moves through the digestive tract. When the villi are destroyed by the body's immune system, the body is less and less able to absorb nutrients from food. Over time, this results in increasingly serious health problems.

Celiac disease is a genetic disorder that affects at least 1 in 133 Americans; however, many who have the disease are not aware of it. Symptoms of celiac disease can vary and include diarrhea, weight loss, malnutrition, bone pain, and gastrointestinal discomfort. Studies have shown that persons with celiac who continue to eat gluten have a dramatically increased risk of developing gastrointestinal cancer.

Children with celiac disease may exhibit gastrointestinal problems, delayed development, short stature, or failure to thrive.

If you are concerned that you or someone in your family may have celiac disease, contact your doctor.

What are "wheat allergies"?

Wheat allergies are fundamentally different than gluten intolerance or celiac disease. This is a histamine response to wheat, much like a peanut allergy or hay fever. Some sufferers break out in hives while others experience moderate to severe stomach pain. The reaction when someone with a wheat allergy eats wheat is almost immediate, whereas the reaction for a celiac sufferer who eats gluten is not.

Kid Corner: Summertime Campout

Warm summer nights. Sleeping under the stars. Roasting marshmallows. Telling stories. There is something almost magical about camping outside. You don't have to be an avid outdoorsman to plan a family campout. You don't even need to go further than your backyard to have a fun camping experience. You just need to go outside and adventure will follow!

Here are a few tips on how you can plan a fun campout with your family:

- **Start Out Small.** If you and your family have never been camping before, start with a backyard campout. Pitch a tent, bring some pillows and blankets from the house, grab a couple flashlights, and you're all set! This option is great for little ones who may get scared or need to take frequent bathroom breaks. As you become more experienced, try going to local parks or forest preserves to have a bigger adventure.
- **Be Prepared.** Have a plan for what to do in case of rainy weather – that means packing rain ponchos, a deck of cards, and crossword puzzles.
- **Pitch a Tent.** Don't set up the tent in a low spot or depression. Rainwater will collect under the tent and soak through into your sleeping bag.
- **Campfire Safety.** Most campsites at parks will have designated fire pits which you should use. If your campsite doesn't have one, or if you're camping in the backyard, build your fire a safe distance from any fences or trees. Always make sure your fire is completely out before you leave the campsite. Visit www.campingtripfun.com for more safety tips.
- **Dress in Layers.** Children get cold faster than adults, so the key is to dress in several layers, which can be taken off or put back on as needed.
- **Plan Your Menu.** Make a list of all the food items you'll need for dinner (like hot dogs, buns, chips, and condiments), s'mores (marshmallows, graham crackers, and chocolate), and breakfast (potatoes, eggs, and cheese). Don't forget the drinks!
- **Play Games.** Before the sun sets and after the tent is set up, it's time to play. Go on a scavenger hunt, play tag, or toss a Frisbee. Older kids can play "Flashlight Tag" when it gets dark. That's where you have to find the person who is "it" by shining your flashlight on them.
- **Tell Scary Stories.** Even the mildest scary story takes on a spookier element when told around the campfire. Keep things lighthearted and tell jokes in between to keep kids from being too scared.

Foil meals are meals where all the ingredients are placed in a foil packet that is cooked on the coals of a fire. It's a simple meal that's perfect for campouts, but it's also one you can prepare on the grill or even in the oven for a rustic flavor in the comfort of your kitchen.

Ingredients:

- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 4 small potatoes, cubed
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 lb skinless, boneless chicken breast meat - cubed
- 1 8-oz package of white button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and sliced into strips
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and sliced into strips

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients and toss to mix well.
2. Evenly divide the mixture between 4 large sheets of aluminum foil. Top each with another sheet of foil and roll up the edges tightly. Wrap each packet again with another sheet of foil to double wrap.
3. Cook in the hot coals of the campfire, turning occasionally, until the chicken is opaque and the potatoes are tender, approximately 40 minutes. If using a conventional oven, cook at 375°F for approximately 1 hour.

Tips for Cooking in Foil

- Use heavy-duty foil to prevent rips. If you use regular foil, double up on the sheets.
- Spray the inside of the foil with cooking spray or rub with butter before adding ingredients. This prevents food from sticking.
- Hard, raw vegetables like carrots and potatoes can take a long time to cook. To speed up the cook time, use the canned variety.
- When finished cooking, open your packet carefully, as it will be full of hot steam!

Five Helpful Tips for Travelers

So you've planned your vacation, made your reservations, bought your plane ticket, and are gearing up for a fun (or relaxing) adventure away from home. Before you head to the airport, check out these extra tips that will help take away the stress of traveling and make your vacation even better:

1. **Book Things Together.** If you need a plane ticket, hotel room, and rental car for your vacation, try booking all three together. Most travel websites offer packages that allow you to book all travel and hotel accommodations at once, saving you money in the process.
2. **Leave Sand on the Beach.** After spending the day lying out in the sun, building sand castles, and swimming or boating in the water, our skin is usually covered in sand – and that's not a souvenir we want to take home with us. An easy solution is to keep a bottle of baby powder in your beach bag. When it's time to hit the road, sprinkle it on your skin, clothes, and shoes. Excess sand will just slide away.
3. **Pack Extra Plastic Bags.** Plastic bags come in handy for storing toiletries (especially those that might leak or still be wet from your morning shower). They can also be used for storing dirty clothes, and they even work as garbage bags if you're nowhere near a trashcan. Sandwich- and gallon-size zip-top bags and tall kitchen trash bags won't take up much room in your bag and you'll always be glad you packed them.
4. **Start at the Back of the Park.** If you're going to a theme park or zoo, head to the back of the park first and then work your way back toward the exit. Most people will stop at the first attraction they see, so you'll be able to avoid some of the crowd by starting out with the furthest attractions. By the end of the day (when you or your kids are feeling tired and spent), you'll be closer to the parking lot, so heading home will be a bit easier.
5. **Roll It Up.** Your suitcase will be able to hold more if you roll your clothes up instead of folding them. You can also make more room by storing extra pairs of socks inside shoes (if you're packing an extra pair), or simply packing them last by rolling them into balls and stuffing them inside any little crevices or open spaces in your bag.

... Carpet Talk...

The best way to keep your carpets cleaner longer is to vacuum on a regular basis. Particles of dry soil get tracked in to your home on shoes, clothing and even gentle summer breezes through open windows. If not removed, they'll settle deep into the pile of the carpet, actually damaging the fibers and making it look dull, dingy, and dirty!

To do all you can to keep your carpet fresh and looking new, keep these tips in mind:

- 1) **Go the extra mile when shopping for a vacuum.** Cheap vacuums don't reach down deep into the carpet fibers, so a great deal of soil is left to accumulate deep down.
- 2) **Use the correct vacuum tools to care for your floor covering.** Combination beater/brush bars agitate carpet pile and loosen it for deep down dirt and debris removal.
- 3) **Opt for a paper bag.** Many vacuums today offer bagless technology, which is downright convenient when it comes to disposing the dirt you've trapped. However, paper bags that trap particles smaller than two microns in size tend to do a more efficient job. Don't forget to replace bags when they're between one-half to two-thirds full for maximum efficiency.
- 4) **Get the height right.** If your vacuum has an adjustable height mechanism, start at the highest setting then lower it until it just touches the pile. Your vacuum should slightly vibrate carpet. If the brush is set too low, you'll wind up overworking the motor and possibly needing to purchase a replacement vacuum sooner than expected.



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT #1254

1518 Steele Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

This issue of Neighborhood News brought to you by:



Phone: 616-451-0787

Fax: 616-451-8303

www.guaranteesystem.com

Inside this issue you'll find:

- Starting a Koi Pond
- Cleaning Corner: Six Helpful Uses for Baking Soda
- Health Advice: Gluten, Wheat, and Celiac Disease
- Kid Corner: Summertime Campout!
- Recipe: Chicken and Veggies in Foil
- Five Helpful Tips for Travelers
- June Money-Saving Special



Money Saving Coupon

**Call to find your
discount based on the
beginning letter of
your last name.**

If you can't use this coupon, give it to a friend!

**As always, you have my Personal Satisfaction
Guarantee. If it's not cleaned to your standards,
we'll clean it again for FREE.**

This coupon expires June 30, 2011