

The Prairieland Splash

We will not have a meeting this May and will not again until further notice. I will start putting in the meeting places again when we are able to resume normal life safely.

**Prairieland Koi &
Pond Society**

**May 9 2020
VOL 11, Issue 4**



**You can pay your dues anytime
now, they are still only \$20**

Please give cash/check to our treasurer:

Or Send To: Letriana Cantrell

311 Arnold Rd.

**Please volunteer
for one of our
office openings**

Hello everyone. I sure hope this finds you well what with the virus and cold weather. It will get better, it always does when it is good and ready. As you probably guessed, we will not meet until further notice. The good thing is the weather is going to get warmer and now we can really work on our ponds.

When I opened my pond in March, the water was so green. I started the bottom drain, turned on the bubbler (bacteria loves oxygen) and did a small water change. It had just started to clear about a foot down (my pond is 4 ft deep) so I could see my fish if they swam to the surface. Then it got rainy which changed to ph and I was right back where I started. I drained a full 10% of the water and added more bacteria and the next day it cleared to 2 ft, the next day, but was cloudy and finally the 3rd day, cleared to the bottom. Since it has gotten cold, it is still totally clear. I can see my fish. They aren't moving much, but at least I can still see the fish.

Have you been thinking of replacing any open spots on the board. Since we have had no takers yet, we decided to double the pay for the treasure, product person and the president, You just can't loose. The pay now is 0 but we are doubling it to 00. You can speak to anyone on the board about which office you would love to fill.

I receive an e-mail from an old pond member, Dr Kugler. He has a friend with a large koi pond and was asking which kinds of salt to use. Loved hearing from him and glad he remembered the club.

Pond Sludge

What is Sludge?

Pond sludge goes by many names; mulm, muck, sediment, and a few more colorful terms. It is simply an accumulation of organic debris that settles in the pond bottom. Most commonly the sludge will be a mixture of leaves, fish waste, decaying plant debris, dead algae, and debris washed into the pond with rain run off.

Is Sludge Harmful?

This sludge is very normal and under most conditions is not going to pose any significant problems unless severe. A thin buildup is to be expected but if kept unchecked this will thicken and begin to create some issues. The decomposition process of the organic material will reduce oxygen levels in the pond. The debris will create anaerobic conditions. This oxygen-free zone can harbor harmful bacteria as well as produce hydrogen sulfide. The hydrogen sulfide will begin to cause harm to other living things in the pond environment starting with the beneficial bacteria. It also can create unpleasant odors in the pond.

How Can Sludge Be Prevented?

You are not going to completely prevent pond sludge but there are certainly some steps that can be taken to reduce the level of buildup and therefore mitigate the potential harmful effects.

Good Filtration. Ensuring the pond is set up with good mechanical and biological filtration will go a long way in reducing the sludge buildup and keeping the pond much healthier. Proper fish keeping. An overstocked pond means more fish waste and less oxygen to assist in the decomposition. The fewer fish you keep the healthier the pond will be. Overfeeding the fish can also be a significant problem. Uneaten food immediately adds to the buildup of debris in the bottom.

Beneficial bacteria. By adding packaged [beneficial bacteria](#) as directed to your pond it will help keep the beneficial bacterial colonies strong and the ecosystem functioning.

Aeration. A higher level of dissolved oxygen in the water will improve the ability of the bacterial colonies to their job. By adding additional aeration you can also help save fish if the sludge buildup is reducing the oxygen within the water.

Manicuring aquatic plants. The normal part of the life of an aquatic plant is for foliage to decay and be replaced by new growth. Clipping off yellow and brown leaves before they have a chance to rot into the water will have a big impact on reducing pond sludge.

Leaf netting. If leaves get in the pond in autumn you can cover the pond with leaf netting. This can be one of the most important steps in keeping the pond cleaner. It is far easier to keep leaves out than to try and remove them later.

How Can Sludge Be Removed?

If the buildup has gotten an inch or more thick or perhaps the fish stir it up causing cloudiness in the pond then you can take steps to remove what is there. There are different methods and products that can be used.

Sludge digesting bacteria. [Some strains](#) of packaged bacteria are more suited to existing build up of pond sludge. You can add these to help accelerate the decomposition process.

Nets. If the debris is mostly leaves that are not yet decayed you may be able to remove some by scooping it out with a pond net. This is usually not quite enough but certainly better than nothing.

[Pond vacuum](#). There are several good pond vacuums that can remove both large and fine debris from the pond. Many people will do this as part of regular maintenance to help ensure a healthy start to the pond season even if the sludge buildup isn't extreme.

Siphon. If your budget does not allow for a pond vacuum and you have an area near the pond lower than the pond level then you can start a siphon with a section of hose. Once the siphon has started simply run the hose along the pond bottom where the bulk of debris is located. the water and then a wet/dry vacuum to remove the sludge and remaining water from the bottom.. This will involve removal of a significant amount of water so you will need [dechlorinator](#) for topping the pond off.

Complete pond drain. If the sludge and debris buildup has gotten a few inches thick or you are unable to solve the issue with the other methods then you may need to resort to a complete cleaning of the pond. We typically try to avoid this as it destroys the balance in place and restarts the pond ecosystem from scratch. If this is the step you take you will need a temporary housing for the fish during this process. You can use your existing pump or sump pump to remove the bulk of the water and then a wet/dry vacuum to remove the sludge and remaining water from the bottom.

A water garden is a functioning ecosystem that requires some oversight from us as pondkeepers. Taking the steps to maintain the water feature helps ensure a beautiful and healthy pond and in the long run maximizes our enjoyment of our ponds.

Food for Thought

Though you can resume feeding your fish their wheat germ food when your [pond thermometer](#) consistently reads above 40°F in spring, you may want to consider waiting until the water temperatures get between 45-55°F. After the long winter, take some time to get their appetite back to full force. Waiting will also them to readjust and get their digestive juices flowing. In the meantime, they will satiate their hunger by snacking on any algae in the pond.



*From the second annual Luau
2011*

Prairieland Koi & Pond Society

JEAN CLARKE

President/Editor

6934 N. St. Mary's Rd.

Peoria, IL 61614

309-370-0460

E-mail: Clarke.jl@comcast.net

Officers

Jean Clarke President/Editor
309-370-0460

Lisa Carter Vice President
309-694-9801

Allen Kruger
Web Master
217-737-3646

Letriana Cantrell Treasurer
309-645-7163

Debra Palmquist
Secretary
309-696-7114

Directors

Greg Cantrell
Product Mgr.of Ways and Means
309-645-7161

Rick Moreland
Food And Beverage
309-694-5057

Todd Bong
309-256-9582

Jim Simmons
309-678-5363

Chairpersons

Lisa Carter
Raffles/Door Prizes/Special
Events
309-694-9001

AKCA

Koi Fish Health Advisors
Jean Clarke
309-370-0460

Karen Hofstetter
309-699-5155

Stacey Schadewalt
217-358-2665

