

HOTWGPS Newsletter

Volume 16 issue 6

Merry Christmas

December 2024

HOTWGPS Events

We had a great turnout for our 2024 Holiday Party at the Galts home. HOTWGPS provided the brisket and turkey from DeMaria's Barbeque and members provided all the side dishes. There was plenty of food for everyone's nourishment. After we were all stuffed, we had our "Bad Santa/ Chinese gift exchange". Everyone had a great time "stealing" popular gifts.



Notes from the editor:

Hello fellow ponders. Do you know what this critter is VERY GOOD AT?



Eating fish!! This is a river otter that has cleaned out the ENTIRE population of our fish! :((This picture was taken with my game camera). Netting didn't deter this critter at all! I have several pictures of raccoons above the net which I guess I should be grateful that they weren't able to join the sushi party.

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On the bright side// I won't be spending as much money on fish food!!



Pond Vac

As a reminder, this is a "Members Only" benefit. You can rent (\$5.00 for up to 72 hours) this super-duper pond cleaning machine very reasonably! John Enders is the "official Pond Vac keeper". Call him 254-848-9596 or send him an email at jnenders@aol.com to schedule your time with the machine. One note of caution when using the pond Vac, watch how much water you are removing from your pond!! It works so well sucking up the "yuk" that one can easily forget how much water is also being removed! That is the voice of experience talking!! When should I start feeding my koi fall fish food?



The following articles are from the Pond Guy

When should I start feeding my koi fall fish food?

You can help prepare your pond fish for their winter hibernation, or torpor, with [The Pond Guy Spring & Fall Fish Food](#) when the water temperature dips below 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Spring and fall pond fish food is a wheat-germ blend packed with vegetable protein, amino acids, and digestive enzymes. This diet helps fish transition into and out of

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winter, is easy to digest, and promotes robust immune systems to fend off diseases.

How do you know when to start feeding fall pond fish food? Here are three clues:

Temperature:

Use your [submersible thermometer](#) to monitor the water temperature throughout the seasons to determine which food is best. Switch to wheat-germ-based spring and fall fish foods when the water temperature is between 40 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Start feeding nutrient-dense food like [The Pond Guy Growth & Vibrance Fish Food](#) when the water stays above 50 degrees consistently.

Fish Mobility:

Are your koi and goldfish moving more slowly than usual? That's another clue that it's time to switch to a lighter food. Fish are cold-blooded and naturally slow their activity in cooler water as their bodies prepare for winter torpor.

Feeding Interest:

As the fish slow their activity and require less food to fuel their metabolisms, they won't be as interested in the tasty morsels as they are in the summer. If your koi and goldfish turn into picky eaters late in the year, it's time to switch to a lighter diet.

Are you wondering when to stop feeding koi for winter? As soon as water temperatures drop below 40 degrees, it's time to stop feeding your fish. Don't worry about how long koi can go without food in winter—they won't starve! During torpor, fish need very few calories and live comfortably off stored fat deposits. Just keep that spring and fall fish

food ready for their first big meal when you start feeding koi after winter (whenever the water temperature stays above 40–50 degrees)!



This is my first winter with a pond. Do I need to bring in my plants?

You've been watching your aquatic plants flourish all year. Your water lilies and hyacinth** put out big blooms, your irises and cattails became homes for frogs and dragonflies, and your submerged plants provided a home for your fish and snails.

With the cold weather on its way, now what do you do with them? Well, it all depends on where you live and what types of plants you have.

In the Zone

What's your hardiness zone? The [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#) will help you determine which plants will thrive in a particular location. The map is based on the average annual minimum winter temperature, divided into 10-degree Fahrenheit zones.

In general, if you live in a hardiness zone that's frost-free, congratulations! All you need to do is trim off dead foliage with your [Scissors & Pliers](#), [fertilize](#) the plants as necessary and enjoy them all year round.

If you live in an area that freezes, however, you have some work to do.

Like terrestrial plants, aquatic plants – whether floating, marginal or submerged – are sensitive in varying degrees to freezing temperatures. Some species will overwinter

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just fine in frostier hardiness zones, while others will wilt and die at the slightest hint of ice.

So before you do anything, get to know your plants and identify which ones are in your zone and which ones aren't.

Overwintering Your Plants

Winter care of water lilies, marginal/bog plants and submerged plants will depend on if they're tropical (anything that likes temperatures above your hardiness zone) or hardy (anything geared for temperatures in your hardiness zone or lower).

Tropical Plants: These sensitive beauties, including tropical water lilies and canna, will need to be removed from the pond and replaced next season, or removed and relocated to a warm indoor space for winter.

Hardy Plants: These easy-care troopers, including hardy [water lilies](#) and submerged plants, only need to have dead foliage removed after the first hard frost. Simply use your [AquaGloves](#) and [Scissors & Pliers](#) to trim away any spent leaves, lily pads or flowers. Once trimmed, sink the plants to the deepest part of your pond. Hardy plants will go dormant in the winter and regrow in the spring.

Floating plants, like hyacinth and water lettuce, can be treated like an annual; they will die over the winter, so remove them from your pond once they begin to yellow. Luckily, they're inexpensive to replace and will grow quickly once re-added. Please note hyacinth and water lettuce can be invasive so be sure to dispose of them properly and never release them into public water. **

****remember, Hyacinth and water lettuce are prohibited in Texas!**

Good luck caring for your first winter pond!



On the lighter side

Sven & Ole heard so much about ice fishing that they decided to try it. Just before they got to the frozen lake, they stopped at the bait shop to buy some bait & tackle. Sven said to Ole, "Vere going to need an ice pick." With their supplies, they head off to the lake. After about two hours, Ole was back at the bait shop. "Vere going to need another dozen of dem ice picks," said Ole.

Ole took the ice picks and headed back to the lake to meet up with Sven. About an hour later, Ole & Sven both showed up at the bait store. "Vere going to need all da ice picks you've got." The bait shop owner asked, "how are you fellas doing out there?" "Not too good. Ve haven't even got da boat in da vater yet." Said Sven.



Ole walked into his boss's office and asked for a raise. His boss told Ole that the markets are down, prices are up for materials and insurance, and that business was not good right now. "Vell, just so you know, der are three udder companies that really vant to get their hands on me." Said Ole.

His boss, not wanting to lose Ole as an employee, says "Ole I'll give you a six percent raise and one extra week of vacation

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per year. How does that sound?" Ole replies, "Tanks boss dat sounds good."

As Ole was leaving the office his boss asked, "just out of curiosity, who are the three companies that want to get their hands on you?" Ole replied "Da electric company, mortgage company and da credit card company."



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Making outdoors awesome

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