

KOI - THE KING AMONG POND FISH

Koi are something very special. Not just because of their unusual colouring and size – the keeping of Koi is about leisure and passion. Animal experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo take a closer look at this majestic carp.

If you ask the Japanese what a koi is, they won't simply answer: "a fish". To them, a koi stands for happiness, success, courage and a long life. So it's no wonder that in Japan the keeping of koi is very widespread. Just as is often the case with ourselves and dogs, the coloured carps count as fully-fledged family members. The difference being... they don't just live for 10 – 20 years but in fact are able to keep their owners company over a whole lifetime. There are koi which are over 100 years old. However, that can only be achieved under ideal keeping conditions. The Japanese don't have to be told that koi need great deal of space for swimming and attach great importance to good water conditions. Ultimately, the well-being of the fish is linked to their own happiness. If one of the koi falls ill, the koi doctor is summoned immediately. There are even a few of these in Germany. These specialist vets travel several hundred kilometres as and when necessary to examine the patients on-site.

BEJEWELLING THE GARDEN POND

Carp have been bred for over 2,000 years but the breeding of koi as we know them today began in Japan only a few hundred years ago. By coincidence, a few coloured mutations appeared among a swarm of grey-brown carp. Those fish became the start of a gigantic breeding culture. There are not only uni-coloured carp in white, yellow, silver, red or even black but also in all



imaginable colour mixes. Koi fans can enthuse to their heart's content. And with the immense choice of colouring there should be something for everyone. For the Japanese or the advanced koi keeper, however, the colour and pattern can sometimes also play a critical role. A koi farm in Japan is handed down from generation to generation and can be a considerable financial investment. This is occasionally demonstrated at

international exhibitions where a particularly exceptional specimen can achieve a top price of up to a quarter of a million euros.

ROYAL AMBIENCE

Anyone wanting to keep this king of pond fish must think generously in terms of its future realm as these fish can grow to a length of 70 cm. A small swarm of coloured carp will need several thousand litres of water space. That's roughly equal to a pond measuring three by five metres at a depth of 1.5 metres. To guarantee ideal water circulation, the pond requires surface draw-off and, depending on size, one or more bottom outflows which feed the water through a mechanical and then biological filter. The filter plant can be cleverly integrated into the landscape. The mechanics are often hidden, for example, under an incorporated wooden terrace with an access trap-door. Maybe you fancy having a go at building a small Japanese-style pagoda. Ornamental shrubs or a few bonsai trees would also be appropriate. The result should be a place where you love to retreat... where you can linger and let your spirits drift.

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