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Follow NorthSide on Facebook to stay up-to-date with their latest specials.



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Comet Goldfish

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Goldfish?

By Shannon Goins

Whether you like bubble eyes, fantails, or telescoping eyes, goldfish are a main staple of the aquatics hobby. Chances are that at one time you owned a goldfish as a child, complete with the traditional goldfish bowl. Times have changed and dingy goldfish bowls

have slowly begun to give way to filtered aquariums that help to keep our gold friends in good health.

Moreover, goldfish have worked their way outside and have become popular additions to numerous backyard ponds. Goldfish can make a great addition to any pond. They don't require a great deal of space, so they make an excellent alternative to koi for people whose ponds are less than 1000 gallons.

All goldfish are not created equally

The term "goldfish" is applied to a wide variety of fish that are distinctly different in appearance. Several centuries of selective breeding has resulted in the development of numerous unusual morphological characteristics. Despite their rather apparent differences, they all stem from the Prussian carp, a grey-ish/gold, rather common looking fish.

Today goldfish come in all shapes, sizes, and colors – several of which are not even gold. There are black goldfish like the Black Moor, tri-colored calico Shubunkins, and even white goldfish with red heads such as the Red Cap Oranda – and new breeds are still being created. One of the most recent color varieties is called the Blushing Apricot which is peach colored with red cheeks.

Goldfish can be categorized into three main groups based on their body shape: the common goldfish (Comets and Shubunkins), fancy goldfish (Fantails and Orandas), and very fancy goldfish (Bubble Eyes and Celestials). Common goldfish like Comets and Shubunkins have short fins and they are very fast swimmers. Very fancy goldfish, by contrast, have extreme physical characteristics such as over inflated tear ducts that appear as bubbles underneath the eyes or fleshy growths on their heads resembling a cap. Additionally, the bodies of most very fancy goldfish are extremely short and stubby making them very poor swimmers.

Pond or Aquarium?

While some goldfish can go in your outdoor pond, several species are best left to the aquarium hobby. When it comes to pond suitability, the general rule of thumb is that the fancier the fish, the less hardy and less suitable it is for a pond.

If you do choose to put very fancy goldfish into your pond, be sure to keep them only with other very fancy goldfish. Take care not to mix them with faster, sleeker, more aggressive goldfish or with koi because it is possible that their fancy appendages will be damaged by the other fish. These injuries can be fatal or cause an outbreak of disease in the pond. Additionally, the faster fish will out-compete the very fancy goldfish for food.

Hazards to Goldfish

Backyard ponds are typically filled with sharp rocks and sticks that make for hazardous terrain if you have lots of fancy appendages that can hang up easily. Comets and Shubunkins are sleek bodied, strong, and fast-swimming goldfish that can swim easily through these underwater obstacles, even using them as cover from predators. Their slim bodies make them better suited to the pond environment than the swollen, fat bodies of their fancier cousins.



Black Moor Goldfish with Telescoping Eyes

Sauternes... Continued from Page 19

take hours, require frequent judicious tastings and ultimately resolve nothing.

The same isn't true of Sauternes. Chateau d'Yquem is the best. The matter was resolved more than 150 years ago. In the official classification of the great wines of Bordeaux in 1855, the highest designation for red wines and for other Sauternes was First Growth or "Premier Cru." Chateau d'Yquem was designated as Great First Growth or "Grand Premier Cru." It is one of the very few things on which wine buffs agree. It is the standard by which others are judged. Tell a knowledgeable person that you have tasted a Sauternes that was better than the Chateau d'Yquem of the same year and you won't even get an argument; what you will likely get will be a look of pity.

The question of what food, if any, to serve with Sauternes is difficult to answer. My own experience is of little help. Long before I started attending wine tastings and reading books on wine and food affinities, I developed a liking for Sauternes and chocolate cake. When I started reading such books, I was told that this just isn't done. Iconoclast that I am, I continue to enjoy and recommend chocolate cake with Sauternes.

Recommendations of Sauternes and fresh fruit by wine writers are almost cliché, but I honestly don't see how anyone who has tasted the combination could recommend it with any degree of assurance. Bland fruit deadens the Sauternes character, acid in ripe fruit and sugar in overripe fruit causes the wine to seem unbalanced and does nothing for the fruit. I wonder if here wine writers haven't been guilty of playing follow-the-leader without checking first to see what the leader was up to.

To get more authoritative information, I researched several books and obtained opinions on wine and food pairings. The recommendations as to what food to serve with Sauternes were both general (dessert, pastries, fruit, cheese, and seafood) and specific (pears, mango, papaya, fruit compote, fruit pudding, flan, Crepes Suzette, Zabaglione, Bavarian cream, strawberries and whipped cream, dessert soufflé, grapes, foie gras and peaches).

Over time, I have tried most of these recommendations as well as others, including cheese (Swiss, Havarti, Port Salut, Brie), pecans, fruit (honey-dew,

Bartlett pears, Bosc pears, peaches, grapes, bananas, strawberries) with whipped cream, with plain white cake (alone and topped with, variously, unsalted butter, whipped cream, caramel, butterscotch), chocolate cake (plain and with unsalted butter, whipped cream, chocolate frosting) and finally, with cheesecake (plain, with lemon, strawberry and chocolate toppings).

My conclu-sion? For lesser Sauternes, cheese (and for me, chocolate cake) will bring out additional nuances in the wine and perhaps cover up minor defects. I would forget the other combinations. Some of them aren't bad, but Sauternes deserves something better than "not bad," and none of them are in the same class as Chablis and seafood, Pinot Noir and roast wild duck or sherry and pecans.

For greater Sauternes (Climens, Coutet, Guiraud, La Tour-Blanche, others) of good years, and especially for Chateau d'Yquem, let the wine stand alone, don't match it with anything; it deserves to star. After dinner is over, after dessert has been savored, after coffee has been poured, enjoyed, replenished and finished, then is the time to bring out the good Sauternes, lightly chilled, and learn without doubt that great Sauternes just doesn't need anything else. Except, of course, a few good friends to create memories with. ✦



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Red Cap Oranda

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Gold Fish?...
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Blue herons and raccoons are a fact of life when you live in a wooded area next to the Arkansas River, so when choosing goldfish for your pond, this should always be of concern. The shallower and more open your pond is, the easier it is for predators to catch your fish. The fast swimming Shubunkins and Comets have the best chance of evading predators. Even so, it is not a bad idea to provide them with underwater cover, such as plastic tunnels like you can find at a pond store to help them stay hidden.

Predator deterrents are a great way to protect your goldfish. The best deterrent is a motion-activated sprinkler head that sprays a quick stream of water when it is set off. It can be adjusted to "look" for different heights of predators and the range of the spray can be adjusted to cover a certain area. These contraptions also work great to ward off deer from flowerbeds. Ask at your local pond retailer for this device.

One hazard to goldfish that is frequently overlooked is the threat of

disease. To avoid an outbreak of disease, be sure that you get healthy goldfish from a reputable supplier. This means never buying "feeder goldfish" for your pond. "Feeder goldfish" are inexpensive because they do not receive the same amount of care that specimens intended to be pets do. "Feeder goldfish" carry disease and they will contaminate your pond and cause illness to your other fish. Healthy goldfish may cost a little bit more, but when you buy healthy fish you can save a lot of money on medications in the long run.

Overstocking your pond or trying to stock it too quickly are very real dangers to your goldfish. Too many fish in too small a pond will cause stress that can kill your fish. Likewise, adding too many goldfish to your pond at once will often result in the death of all of the fish because of ammonia poisoning. In this scenario a domino effect happens. When a couple of fish die, the resulting ammonia usually kills the remaining fish because the bacterial filter is not capable of handling the waste load.

Water Temperature

Water temperatures must be taken into consideration when choosing goldfish for your pond because not all goldfish varieties can withstand the warmer water found in summer and the extreme cold of winter. Very fancy goldfish are not well suited to either high or low temperatures, so if you plan to put them into your pond, you will need to make sure that the pond is either deep or shaded to keep it cool in summer and you will need a contingency plan for winter.

Comet and Shubunkin goldfish are well adapted to extreme cold and can handle a bit warmer water than most other goldfish. However, water temperatures that exceed 85 degrees F have very little dissolved oxygen and fish can easily suffocate – especially if there are a number of fish competing for that oxygen. So no matter which kind of fish you choose, make sure that your pond stays cool. If you have no shade, consider adding a running water feature such as a waterfall to reduce the heat.

What to do with Goldfish in Winter

Some people opt to keep very fancy goldfish such as the Celestials and Bubble Eyes in their outdoor ponds even though they are not winter hardy. Choosing to do this necessitates an action plan for winter for the welfare of the animals. This plan should include a place to house the goldfish indoors that is of sufficient size to prevent overcrowding and it should have a very good filter to prevent ammonia poisoning.

If you already have an aquarium with tropical fish such as community fish or cichlids, this may seem like an easy solution. However, goldfish require cooler temperatures and won't make good tank mates for your existing fish. A better idea is to arrange for an aquarium or large vat to be set up exclusively for the goldfish and kept between 65-70 degrees F. Don't forget to add dechlorinator to the aquarium just like you do for the pond. Chloramine (a similar molecule to chlorine) is in our water and does not evaporate.

When you put in the goldfish, transfer



Bubble-eye-goldfish

than once every other day and the amount should never exceed what they can consume in 2-3 minutes. You must steel yourself against begging attempts to get more food as excess food will quickly pollute the water and cause algae growth.

Compared to other fish, goldfish produce a lot of waste. By feeding a higher quality food, you can improve the health and color of your fish and reduce their waste. If you have ever fed a dog a cheaper brand of food, you know that the waste it leaves behind in undigested food is a lot greater than if you feed it a high quality food. The same thing goes for fish – better quality in, less waste out. The less food waste that you have in your pond or aquarium, the less food there is to fuel the growth of algae as it breaks down.

Goldfish have traditionally been understood as a common fish, but the more that you learn about them, the more fascinating they become. Their attention-grabbing shapes and colors offer something for everyone. One fish, two fish, red fish, goldfish - no matter which one you choose, it will undoubtedly provide a great deal of entertainment for the whole family.

part of the old filter material from the pond to the new aquarium to help populate it with good bacteria. If you can't fit it into the aquarium filter, just drop it in the aquarium and let it float for a couple of weeks. Also, you can minimize the risk to your goldfish by transferring them inside only one or two at a time. This will minimize the initial amount of waste and will allow the bacterial filter to set itself up gradually.

If your pond is full of Shubunkins, Comets, or Fantails, you may leave them in the pond during winter provided that it will not freeze. All that is needed is a simple pond heater that will keep a small surface area of the pond free from ice. This allows noxious fumes to leave the pond and oxygen to get into the pond. You can obtain pond heaters from your local pond retailer.

Feeding

Goldfish have a great deal of personality and interact with their care takers. They frequently "make a show" in order to get fed, even though they may not need it. Remember that feeding should be no more frequent

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