

Pond Food: An Array of Options

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Pond fish diets come in all shapes, sizes and formulations, each with unique benefits. This chart represents a synopsis of the various forms and functions available.

(Information for this chart was provided by pond food manufacturers, distributors and retailers.)

Form/Feature	Form/Feature	Form/Feature
Flake	A light, dried, almost filmlike formulation	Ideally suited for very small pond fish
Pellet	Round, extruded/compressed bites of varying sizes	A common form of pond food; suited for fish of all types and sizes
Stick	Extruded/compressed bites, similar to pellets, though longer and larger in size	Often preferred for larger fish, though suitable for nibbling by smaller fish
Floating food	Formulated to remain at the pond surface	Represents most pond foods on the market; enables owners to watch fish as they eat, gauge the suitability of the amount eaten and remove uneaten food if needed
Granular (sinking) food	A dense formulation designed to sink below the pond surface	Inexpensive and more often used by hatcheries than hobbyists
Hand-held treats	Larger than pellets or sticks; available in a wide array of ingredients and formulations	Enables pond owners to interact with their fish; provides opportunity to inspect fish for signs of illness or injury
Time-release (vacation)	Gel- or plaster-based feeding blocks designed to release food over a period of days or weeks	Provides peace of mind to traveling pond owners and continuous nutrition to pond fish
Seasonal (spring/fall diets)	Highly digestible formulations; lower in protein than summer foods; often wheat germ-based	Transitions fish in and out of winter
Growth	High-protein diets; often featuring additional nutrients and vitamins	Designed to promote rapid growth in fish for owners looking to achieve optimal size
Color-enhancing	Can be formulated with a variety of natural color enhancers, such as spirulina, astaxanthin and other carotenoids	Promotes brilliant coloring in pond fish; of particular interest to koi enthusiasts interested in showing their fish
Organic	Produced, processed and certified to be consistent with national organic standards from U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program	Assures pond owners that the sources of ingredients are traceable and free of synthetic chemicals, antibiotics and hormones
Immune-function boosting	Frequently formulated with live microorganisms to reduce the effects of pathogenic bacteria in the fish and the pond	Designed to support a healthy immune system and improve feed efficiency
Medicated	Incorporates treatments (often antibiotics) to fight common infections	Formulated to treat and prevent illnesses and parasites in pond fish