

From Dealer to Pond, Keep Koi Safe

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Experts recommend filling the koi transport bag with water to cover the fish and its gills and then with oxygen. (Courtesy of Laguna Koi Ponds)

Once you choose your fish, the dealer will double-bag it in plastic. The bag needs enough water to prevent any part of the fish to touch the bottom and to cover the dorsal fin with at least one inch of water. Pure oxygen fills the rest of the bag.

“You want more air than water,” said Matt Miyahara, a sales representative at Laguna Koi Ponds in Laguna Beach, Calif. By doing so, movement within the bag incorporates oxygen.

Place the bag in a box and place the box so the fish is horizontal in your car, said Jennifer Vue, store manager of Koi Gardens Inc. in Spokane, Wash. “This way they won’t bump their noses or tails,” she said.

At home you have two options. Either set up a quarantine system before buying the fish or acclimate your fish to the pond.

If money and space allow, Miyahara advises customers to set up a 250-gal. tank with a mature filtration system, oxygen and heat or insulation. Because new fish jump a lot, Miyahara said a cover might benefit the koi as well.

Acclimate the fish to the quarantine tank by floating the bag for 30 minutes. Leave the new fish in the tank for one month, and consider treating them with an anti-parasitic or anti-bacterial medicine, Miyahara said.

For pond water acclimation, let the unopened bag of fish float in the water for 15 to 30 minutes. Then open the bag and pour the fish and the water into the pond, Vue said. Add anti-parasitics for three to four days after adding the fish to the pond, Miyahara said. You need not treat your fish with chemicals if they leave the store parasite-free, Vue said.

You can dump the fish and the water from the bag into your pond, Miyahara said, because most parasites remain on the fish, and anti-parasites take care of those. Vue, on the other hand, said to remove the fish from the bag with your hands and discard the water elsewhere to prevent contamination. She said anti-parasites prove unnecessary with this method.

Because dealers hold different views on chemical treatment and the disposal of bag water, defer to your dealer or other fish expert. Discover the best method for you and your customers.