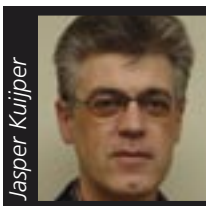


ACROSS THE POND



Jasper Kuijper has been a Koi keeper for more than 20 years. He now works for Evolution Aqua as their commercial director and was the man responsible for designing the revolutionary Nexus and Eazy Pod filters that are so popular today.

During my last visit to America I was keen to find out what some of the differences between European and American Koi ponds were and, needless to say, there were some big ones. First of all, European Koi keepers have got much easier access to information on pond building, whether it be from magazines, books, the Internet or Koi clubs – but that is not the case in America. When you go to big book shops like Borders, it's not surprising to find only one shelf dedicated to gardening and a few books about water gardening. When you open these books you might find a few references to goldfish and shubunkins, and if you're lucky, Koi.

Finding a magazine about Koi in your local newsagent is something Koi keepers in America can only dream of, and the same goes for pet shops. This makes it very hard for newcomers to the hobby to find out any information at all about how to build a proper Koi pond – so a lot of Koi keepers use contract builders to help them build the pond of their dreams. However, a lot of marketing hype is generated in America and the information that is given is, in many cases, not correct. To give you an example, it is claimed in America that UV units create radiation which is not healthy for fish or humans. This is, of course, not true, but if this is what you're told, you

Jet-setting Koi keeper **Jasper Kuijper** reports from the United States where he was shocked by some of the Koi keeping myths that are bandied about across the pond and about how different their setups are to ours



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Waterfall lovers

But despite all of this, American ponds look very natural and are pleasing to the eye. The main difference between their ponds and ours in Europe is that they are not very

These kinds of filters are of a very low quality and not rigid at all, but the trend in America is for hiding filters so they need to be made in this way. European Koi keepers, on the other hand, are very proud of their filters and like to show them off because they know that creating good water is not as simple as it seems. They want to provide the very best for their Koi by using UV units, bottom drains and heaters and know that these are essential pieces of equipment.

"The trend in America is for hiding filters – European Koi keepers, on the other hand, are very proud of their filters and like to show them off"

would probably believe it was. The same goes for bottom drains – they're not recommended in the US because it is believed that the sludge at the bottom of a pond creates a healthy natural environment and that the bacteria contained within this sludge are beneficial to Koi – but these bacteria will not keep your water quality at the standard it needs to be for Koi. They also say bottom drains are dangerous because they can leak – another misnomer.

deep and the filter construction is different. Most use a skimmer filter and pump the water to a waterfall. Waterfalls are very popular and provide a good supply of oxygen and, more importantly, they are a good way of using up the excavated earth that is left over from digging a pond.

To solve the limited biological capacity of their filters, American Koi keepers tend to use overflow boxes filled with media that help the bacteria find an extra surface area.

Koi ponds here we come

There is new market emerging in the US that is looking to persuade owners of water-garden ponds to change them for Koi ponds complete with a bottom drain, UV unit and a more suitable filtration system. Specialist Koi shops are emerging that can inform the consumer correctly about how to build Koi ponds, and some of them are even displaying different types of ponds so consumers can find out what the differences are. But this is a difficult job when marketing companies tell lies about UV units giving off bad radiation and that bottom drains are not needed in a Koi pond. ■