

FEDERATION OF BRITISH AQUATIC SOCIETIES

Pond Care Sheet No 7

FEEDING

173/08/2004

The feeding of fish in an outdoor environment is not under as strict control as is the case with an indoor aquarium where only food donated by the fishkeeper enters the water.

In the great outdoors any manner of potential food can enter the pond ranging from aquatic 'wildlife' to seeds blown in by the wind. Add to this, the effects that seasonal temperatures have on the fishes' metabolism, and you will appreciate what a complicated subject pond feeding just might be.

SPRING

With the fish regaining not only their immunity from disease but also their appetite after the winter period, things must be taken slowly.

Easily-digested foods are the order of the day and it is usual to feed wheatgerm-based foods at this time. Once water temperatures have climbed, and remain, consistently above 10°C/50°F the regular flake, stick foods can be given. Live food such as *Daphnia*, clean *Tubifex*, Bloodworm etc can be given as a variant to the normal dry food diet and these foods will help the fish to get into breeding condition.

When spawning occurs, any subsequent fry will require very small food at first followed by a higher protein content food. However, the feeding of fry is more likely to be arranged in fry-raising aquariums than in the pond as serious Goldfish keepers usually remove egg-laden plants from the pond for hatching under more controlled conditions.

Where fry do stay in the pond from spontaneous spawnings then many will fall prey to carnivorous water insects but the survivors will find plenty of natural tiny foods in the water for them to feed on.

SUMMER

There will be an abundance of natural food in the pond throughout the summer and the temptation to feed continually should be resisted. Any undigested (or uneaten) food will contaminate the water and also lay good foundations for algae food in the next year's Spring.

AUTUMN

Summer's well fed fish will have laid up layers of fat to see them through the winter months of inactivity but, just like Spring, there needs to be a similar adjustment of food quality.

As the water temperature cools, the fish's appetite also diminishes and again easily digestible foods should be given.

WINTER

Once water temperatures remain consistently below 10°C/50°F, **STOP FEEDING.**

Firstly, the inactive fish will not need it and secondly, if they do take food in, it can remain undigested in the fish's gut and so cause serious health problems.