



Goldfish rising to the surface of this pond.

## **Spring ... time to feed the fish again, or not?**

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It sure feels more like spring. The air holes in my ponds have gradually

increased to the point where the entire pond is ice free. There is no need to worry about methane gas killing my fish this year.

Many people are asking me if they can start feeding their fish. My answer is a definite no! As long as the water is below 5 degrees Celsius, fish can't digest the food. Once the water temperature stays above that, it is not necessary, but if you are keen, you can slowly begin feeding small quantities of low protein food. This would include special spring & autumn fish food mixes, which are low in protein and often include wheat germ. Plain 'Cherrios' will also provide them with a high carbohydrate diet.

When the temperature of the water stays above 10 degrees Celsius, that's when you can begin feeding the higher protein summer food. They need the protein for growth.

Remember that goldfish don't really need to be fed, because they can easily forage around for bugs (like mosquito larvae) and algae. I do however feed mine, because I want them to come up and greet me every time I walk up to the pond. They feel the vibrations of my foot steps and they're actually coming up to 'Beg' for food. If I don't feed them, they become more "shy" and stay mostly hiding.

Let's put it all in perspective. Do you remember the middle of last March? That's when Skaha Lake was frozen and the air temperature was around 14 degrees BELOW zero. So it is early to start feeding, but when the time comes the fish will give you cues by coming up when the sun begins to warm the surface of the water.

This is however a great time to plan your pond upgrades for the next season. Be sure to check out our seminar schedule, which starts on February 27th. Whether you have a pond or you are considering one, these ½ day sessions are packed with valuable information, so that your water gardening experiences will be more fun and relaxing.