

**Ramblings** — Jerry Kyle

My heart leaped when I saw him. The big golden koi with black edgings on the scales was laying on the cement walkway, not moving. It must have been there for quite awhile as the cement under him wasn't even wet any longer. Dry to the touch and somewhat stiff when held up by the tail, looking about as dead as dead can get and it's going to be all my fault since Phyllis had told me to put a net over the tank and I hadn't listened. Don't cry about it, just put him in the garbage can and see if there are any more that jumped out. No, thank goodness. My heart slowed down a little.

I don't even know what kind of koi this is. Looking at the chart I see that a Yamabuki Ogon is a metallic gold but, what is it if it also has black reticulation around each scale? That means each scale is edged with black which really shows off the scales. Nothing like that on the chart. In addition this old boy had the black filling in on the face around the eyes so he had a mask kind of like a raccoon. Whatever he was he was distinctive. I bought him two years ago at the club auction. One of the advantages of belonging to the Camellia Koi Club is the auction held each year when members make available to other members their extra koi. It is a great opportunity for newcomers to pick up a nice large colorful koi for not a lot of money and that sure helps when one is just starting out. Jack said, "Bid on that! You don't have anything like it and it is pretty." It was about twenty four inches long and the gold was not yellow gold like most. It was golden gold set off by the black reticulation. I learned it originally was Pauline's hand fed pet. She needed to reduce the number of koi in her pond due to the fact they were all getting so big. Now in addition to Phyllis being upset, Pauline was going to hate me.

It's garbage day so need to put the cart out by the curb. Opened the lid and dropped in another small bag of stuff. Did I see a tail twitch? I had to know for sure so picked up the golden koi and verified he was stiff and definitely not twitching but, for some reason, I could not drop him back in the cart. I just couldn't and don't know why.

I took this dry koi and held it underwater in the quarantine tank he had jumped out of and after opening its mouth and unsticking the gill plates, pushed it through the water so the water would flow through and over the gills. After about five minutes my arms were getting tired of this so I held the mouth open and positioned it under a water jet. My above ground quarantine tank is four feet wide and twelve feet long designed to hold all my koi in the case of an emergency. To effectively aerate these one thousand gallons of water there is a spray bar all around the perimeter of the tank which froths the water to maximum oxygenation. It was easier on my arms to let the water jets push water through the gills. After about 15 minutes I felt I had done all I could and decided that since the fish is obviously dead as originally thought I will give it five more minutes and then quit. That way I won't feel quite so guilty since I did the best I could. Then, five more minutes and then five more minutes but, this is the last time. Just as I gave up and started to lift him out of the water his mouth made a feeble sucking motion. Oh my God, this couldn't be. But it was. He was breathing. Well, not breathing but

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trying to. It took a total of forty five minutes before this big boy could breath on his own and even then he could not swim.

Now I witnessed another unexpected phenomenon. Some of the other older koi in the tank pushed him under the spray and as the current from the spray pushed him away the other koi, using their bodies, kept him pushed back and positioned so he stayed directly under the spraying water where there was maximum oxygen. I was dumbfounded. These were the kind of stories one hears but never expects to experience firsthand.

It was three days later before our hero took food and is now doing just fine. I am sure he has forgiven me for being careless and not covering the tank since he readily comes up to suck on my fingers, be fed, and he allows me to pet and stroke him. He never let me touch him before. Phyllis is happy and Pauline is still talking to me. The lesson is that a koi may be out of the water for a considerable length of time and may recover if you can push water through its gills and do not give up. Of course, a net on the quarantine tank would help.