

April 13, 2007

## Subject: Salt for My Pond?

Many customers ask; what can I do to maintain a healthy environment for my pond and fish?

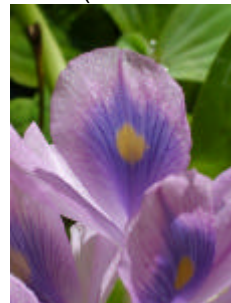
Generally the first thing I tell them is to not clean the sidewalls of their pond, and use salt. The sidewalls typically contain beneficial bacteria, and food source for your fish. Just keep the debris off the bottom by using a high quality net, vacuum, or pump. If you have Koi, they continue to root around in any string algae for morsels, as well as consuming the algae as most of us do with lettuce!

But, we need to talk about salt. Salt is a natural substance, and is found and consumed by all of us, so what are the benefits to our "fishy" friends. Well, Disease control is the primary benefit, the following occurs with the proper amount of salt used in the pond environment.

1. Killing of Parasites
2. Killing of Bacteria
3. Thickening or repairing the slime coat
4. Effective Electrolytic Level
5. Nitrite Blocking

Will Salt harm my plants? Yes, if you use too much; I like to maintain a .17% to .2% (two tenths of a percent) level of salt in my ponds. A rule of thumb is to use 2 pounds of salt per 100 gallons which equals the .2% level.

Hyacinths are one of the plants most sensitive to salt, and I have not had any problem with enjoying them in full bloom, as you can see from the photo on the right. To see more photo's of our plants flourishing in "salted" ponds, check out my web site at [www.iowaponds.com](http://www.iowaponds.com) and clicking on the photo gallery.



If you are starting up a new pond, or are experiencing in-balance, salt does help protect the fish from nitrite toxicity. I could write a book on how the fish benefit from the salt, and would encourage those who really want to know more to do a Google search on the internet using key word "Koi Pond Salt".

Many recommend sea salt, I have been using water softener salt (**ONLY CERTAIN TYPES**), with a high level of success. You can find it at your local lumber yards, and many grocery stores. It is the cheapest salt they sell, often less than \$5.00 for a 50 pound bag. Do not buy pellets, you look for "rock salt" style, and read the bag. You want 99.9% Salt, with **NO** Additives. I also attempt to keep in on inventory at my location.

How do I maintain such a low level? I like to use the electronic salt meters available and labeled as "Koi-Medic" (my price is \$79.99) manufactured by Trans Instruments, and read out in percent. I started out with a refractometer, but found that it was too difficult to use for such a finite level. I do not have any experience with the Salt Test kits, as I like the "dip and read" convenience of the electronic meters.

Enjoy your Healthy Pond, Your Fish Will Love you for it!

Bill Dedic