

Rock Bottom Ponds

by Gene Maingot

Rock bottom ponds that do not have bottom drains and adequate filtration are not recommended for keeping Koi. Although these ponds are attractive and less costly to build, years of experience has shown that Koi do not prosper, grow to full size, or live to their natural lifespan in this style of pond. Koi live long and healthy lives when provided a safe environment and good water quality. Shallow rock bottom ponds without bottom drains provide neither and are considered hazardous to Koi.

These ponds require specialized cleaning at least twice a year, consisting of draining the pond and removing the Koi in addition to the fish and plant wastes. These ponds have poor water quality due to the harmful bacteria that is caused by these waste products being trapped between the rocks between cleanings. The Koi in these ponds also tend to be underfed simply because the filtration system cannot dispose quickly enough of the adverse bacteria generated from the Koi food in the water. Additionally, the shallow depth of these ponds, often less than three feet, makes the Koi very vulnerable to predators such as herons, raccoons, and egrets.

Rock bottom ponds without bottom drains make excellent water features and are great homes for water gardens and animal life such as frogs and turtles.

**The Inland Koi Society, established in 1987, was developed to provide its members helpful information about keeping their ponds and fish healthy. If you have any further questions about Koi keeping or pond construction, please feel free to contact us.