

# **Caring for Koi Fish**

## **Living Jewels**

Koi are ornamental varieties of the common carp, bred for their beautiful colors and patterns. These long-lived fish can survive 25-35 years with proper care, with some individuals living over 100 years.

## **Pond Requirements**

Koi need large ponds - at least 1,000 gallons for a small collection. Water depth should be at least 3 feet to protect fish from temperature extremes and predators. Filtration is essential as koi produce significant waste. Include areas of shade and shelter.

## **Feeding**

Koi are omnivores who eat both plant matter and small invertebrates. Feed high-quality koi pellets as a staple, with occasional treats of watermelon, peas, or shrimp. Feed only what they can consume in 5 minutes. Reduce feeding in cold weather when metabolism slows.

## **Variety and Color**

Koi come in dozens of recognized varieties based on color and pattern. Kohaku (white with red) is considered the king of koi. Other popular varieties include Sanke (white, red, and black) and Showa (black with red and white). Colors can change with age, diet, and water quality.