



## ADDING FISH TO YOUR POND

First and foremost, DO NOT ADD fish to your pond until the ecosystem has had a good 6-month growing season to mature. Fish like to chew on plants and root around in the pond, so the plants need to have a healthy root system established to overcome fish activities.

The number one killer of pond fish is stress. This makes the acclimation process (adding fish to your pond) one of the most important moments in your fishie's life. Each time a fish is captured, transported and released, is a stressful event for the fish – how stressful is in the hands of the “handler” – literally. Three things contribute to stress levels in you new fish:

1. The act of **capture and transportation** itself. The quicker this part is done, the better. Do not go grocery shopping or run a couple of errands while fish are waiting in a bag in your car! Fish should be transported from the purchase location to their new home as quickly as possible. The smaller the quantity of water, the faster the temperatures can fluctuate. This brings us to the second factor affecting fish stress levels.
2. Rapid **temperature swings** are very stressful to fish. Most fish stores will recommend floating the fish in your new pond until the temperature in the bag water and in the pond is equalized. This is a sound methodology for avoiding the temperature stress problem.
3. What is not accomplished by floating the bag of new fish is **pH equalization**. Here in Arizona, our pond pH naturally hovers around 8.5 (+/- .5). The fish shops will try to store fish for sale at 7.8, which is neutral pH as all the books on the subject will recommend. If you try to keep your pond at a neutral pH, you will be doing battle with Mother Nature on a daily basis, and are likely to have regular fish stress problems all the time. Koi and goldfish can, and do, tolerate a very high pH measurement. We have found that it is better to acclimate your fish to our alkali conditions, which is not only less stressful to the fish, but also to the pond owner. ;)

### Sources for Gambusia (Mosquito Minnows):

Gambusia should be acclimated in the same manner as described above. Here are a couple of sources for Gambusia. In addition, pet stores will often carry them, but you'll need to call around.

Maricopa County Vector Control (free source)

3343 W. Durango

602-506-0700

Phoenix Tropical Fish

3148 N. 37<sup>th</sup> St.

602-955-4180

### **The Garden Gnome, L.L.C. dba The Pond Gnome**

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