
ZEN NIPPON AIRINKAI

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER



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NEWSLETTER

Day: Sunday Sept 18, 2016

Time: 10:00am to noon

Place: **Nori Maeda**
6623 Blewett Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91406
818-994-8625

Program: Breeding Culling/Selection

For those of you who were not able to make the August meeting at the Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden do not be discouraged. The visit by our club to this beautiful strolling garden was much appreciated by the owners and we have been invited back to hold another meeting with them. This came as a very welcome surprise to me and I couldn't be more proud of the warmth and sharing of information that took place on that Sunday.

The day began with our hosts Connie and Jim giving us the history of how this garden came into being. This location is truly a labor of love, as we discovered that it was Jim's mother who purchased the property after the passing of the original owners. What was very interesting was to hear the process that has taken place to restore, maintain and prepare for the future of this garden and pond. This couple is doing everything in their power to ensure that this garden will continue to be an example and asset to their community for years to come. As Connie shared, it has been through the generosity of talented individuals providing their expertise that has help revive and move the garden forward. And now ZNA SoCAL has added their name to this list of expert assistants.

When we asked our hosts what it was that they were hoping to learn from us was an easy answer....'We want to know that our fish are healthy.' With that as our objective we broke into three teams to gather information and data about the pond and their koi. Our teams were #1 water quality, #2 physical pond and mechanics, #3 current health of the koi population. The day reminded me very much of our show set-up day with groups of folks busy doing their activities at stations throughout the garden; water sampling, examination of pond equipment, pond layout and depths, netting and scraping of koi to check for parasites. What a hive of activity....and lots and lots of questions for the owners. I am 100% sure that we wore them out...but they had smiles on their faces all day!

As quick summary what we found was a) the water quality tests were all within acceptable parameters, b) the physical layout of the two impendent ponds is not ideal for koi as neither pond has any designated filter system being used, c) the koi are currently healthy. While our findings from our day of exploration are going to be condensed into a more formal written report, we did share our immediate thoughts with Jim and Connie. Our primary recommendation was to NOT add

any more koi to their collection. We all felt that given the physical set up of the ponds they are at a balance point right now and no further fish load should be introduced. Naturally we had lots and lots of ideas on what could be done to improve the physical plant aspects of the ponds, but it is clear that funds to make changes are not readily available. This is an aspect that is challenging for our final report. But like all of us Jim and Connie had an immediate concern and that was how to deal with raccoons! They had lost a fish on Thursday and were very much afraid that more would be lost. So this point brought out lots of ideas on how to deal with these pesky varmints. It was fun to hear all the things that have been tried and I do believe that Connie and Jim were relieved to know that we all face this issue and that they are not alone.

So it was a busy but fun day and you'll all be able to see the final report when it has been completed. Thanks to all who participated in gathering our 'data'. Thanks to Jeff Fleischer for bringing his microscope with camera and laptop. What a fantastic way to have lots of folks see what it is you are looking for when you do a scraping.

Our meeting this month is being hosted by Nori Maeda, whom we all know is very *koikichi* about breeding and growing koi. I think we have all heard him describe his 'landscaping' as being totally devoted to tanks for his babies. We're going to get a chance to see just how this hard working member produces such great results. Is it 'special' equipment and food, or just lots of plain hard work and loving care?

This is a great opportunity to ask Nori in detail just how he does things and also have a chance to hear about the process that he (and Chai) use when they are culling/selecting after a breeding. Now there may be a secrete or two that Nori will keep for himself, but this is another great opportunity to see firsthand what key points you should be looking for when selecting young koi.