

Finformation

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www.gpasi.org

July 2004



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Next Meeting: July 30
Curt Smith
on South American killies.
(Plus raffle and auction!)

**CONTACT THE
NEWSLETTER**

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**Back issues of *Finformation* are
available in full color online at**
gpasi.org/newsletter.html

COVER IMAGE

Cover image by Bill Shenefelt:
"You're not so tough."

MEMBERSHIP

DUES are \$20 a year per family
or street address.
To become a member, write to us or
see Steve Gibbs at the next meeting.
Visit WWW.GPASI.ORG

General Meetings are held at the
Phipps Garden Center in Mellon
Park at the Corner of
5th and Shady Avenues.
DOORS OPEN AT 7 PM

General Meetings

July 30
Aug. 27 • Sep. 24 • Oct. 29
Nov. 19

Board of Directors Meetings
7 p.m. at Elmer's Aquarium in
Monroeville:

Aug. 9 (Fall Meetings TBA)

All members and suggestions for
discussion are welcome. Contact a board
member for meeting confirmation.

NEWSLETTER/WEB TEAM

Thanks to these members who help with
Finformation and the website:
Nancy Frieze, Mailing
Connie Yarris, Exchange Typist
Terrence Trasatti, Printing Facilitator

Upcoming GPASI Events

July Meeting

On July 30, we will have a regular meeting at the Phipps Garden Center. **Curt Smith will talk about South American annual killifish.** He'll cover species, breeding, rearing, packaging, and shipping.

Curt lives in Lordstown, Ohio. He has been involved with specifically SA annuals for the past 7 or 8 years. He maintains over 100 tanks of killies. He is a retired electrician from General Motors and fish are his only vice at the present. He is president of YATFS and belongs to both NOKA and PAKA, as well as the SAA. The doors open at 7:00 and the meetings starts at 7:30. We will also have a raffle and an auction.

August Meeting

At our August meeting, Bob Cashin will talk to us about livebearers. Look for more details in the next newsletter,



Female Batik Loach. The name probably came from the intricate pattern that seems to be printed on the skin of the loach.

Photo by Sallie Boggs

See story on page 4.

President's Message

By Jean Grace

I'm happy to announce that the Board of Directors has voted to have a fish show next year and that Joe Amuso has agreed to be chair of the show committee. Thank you, Joe, for being willing to provide leadership for this important event. The show allows us to reach the public in the region, bringing us new members. It also allows current members to help advance the club, learn more, and have a great time.

If you would like to help the show committee, please let me know or speak with Joe at one of our summer events. We need lots of help to have a successful show. As many of you have heard, the Palace Inn has closed, so we also have the challenge of finding a new venue.

Our summer picnic is an opportunity for us to celebrate the success of our last show and thank the folks who worked so hard to plan, set up, and run the show. Please join us at North Park on August 28. Sign up at the next meeting to tell us how many people you are bringing with you and to tell us what you can contribute to the day (a favorite dessert? A good salad? Some games for the kids to play?). I'd like to thank Stacy Gatto for doing such a great job of organizing the event. See article below for more details.

See you at the next meeting!

GPASI Annual Picnic

Once again, GPASI is hosting a family picnic for club members. Unlike previous years, this picnic is to be located at the Richland pavilion at North Park, which is just off Babcock Boulevard. It is relatively close to the swimming pool. There are also a playground and bathrooms right beside the pavilion. There are several other activities nearby, and flyers regarding the park will be available at the raffle table for those who are unfamiliar with the park. **The picnic will be Saturday, August 28, 2004, starting at 11 a.m.** (Set up can begin as early as 9 a.m.)

If you don't know where North Park is, you can visit the Parks Department website and click on the link for driving directions to North Park:
<http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/parkphon.asp>

The club will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, pop, condiments and utensils. Side dishes, desserts, and appetizers will be appreciated, and a sign up sheet will be made available so that we have a good selection.

Please see Stacy Gatto at the raffle table to sign up to bring something to the picnic. We do also have the permit for alcohol, so it is permissible to bring beer or liquor. **No glass please!** If anyone would like to volunteer to bring games or provide slave labor, please let Stacy know. (724) 387-2936. The picnic is GPASI's way of saying thanks to the members, so "Thanks for another GREAT year, and we hope to see you there!"



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~ There can be no club
without its members. If
there is anything that you
would like to do for GPASI,
just let one of us know.
We'd be happy to have you
as part of the team. ~

BAP Article

Spawning the Batik Loach (*Neomcheilus triangularis*) By Sallie Boggs, PhD

On March 26, 2004, I was studying the loaches in my 40 gal breeder tank. This tank has several species of small loaches including 6 of the kind that look exactly like the Batik Loach pictured on the Loaches Online website where Mike Ophir (mophir@yahoo.com) made the following comment on Tue, 16 Mar 1999:

“This is a rather shy and secretive loach that likes to come into full light only while feeding, and likes to live singly. It prefers small pebbles or sand to burrow in. When nervous they can change from a light brown to a very deep black. They prefer warm water (80-81 deg F) and a pH. of 6.9-7.2. They eat live worms as well as flaked and frozen foods.”

I had had these loaches for almost a year and they were about half the size they are now when I bought them from The Fish Place in Tanawanda, near Buffalo. Unlike the above report, these loaches were not shy and seemed to like to perch on top of the various pots and tiles in the tank. The only time they seemed shy was when I wanted to catch them. They were about 2” long with the female being about .5 inch longer and wider in girth. One female looked particularly robust and the smaller slimmer males were keeping company with her, but were not aggressive. The tank had been heated to about 79 degrees, but the weather outside was scheduled to warm up so I had turned off the heat. The tank has two large sponge filters with the air turned to maximum. A foot long sailfin *Plecostomus* serves to keep the tank sides clean of algae and, being a gentle giant, also serves as a hiding place for loaches from time to time.

The tank had had two 25% water changes in the previous two weeks. (All my water is fairly soft at about 100 ppm (test kit) and I add a few grains of limestone to all my tanks to buffer the water and keep it from dropping the pH too low.) On occasions a hot magnum filter was added to help remove accumulated debris. The temperature was 72 degrees Fahrenheit when I removed the fat female and one male to a 10-gallon tank with fresh (chlorine free) water. A hot magnum filter was affixed to the one end of the tank. The outflow was directed to a “worm keeper” box full of gravel directly under the filter. In addition, two large mops were held down by a tile. Before the fish disappeared under the mops I noticed the male had bright reflective red-bronze in the belly and lower body. The patterns on both fish were more distinct than usual. The next day I looked for the fish under the mop and found the male was dead. The female was still fat so I caught another male and put him into the tank with the female. The next day I noticed the pair going up and down one corner and doing loops around one side of the tank. Soon they went into the mop and I could tell they were together and one was upside down. I could not see anything but the tails. Then they went deeper under the mop.

As I stared into the tank looking for the fish I thought I saw a tiny spot in the mop. I went to get a flashlight and magnifying glasses and discovered that the spot was indeed an egg. Closer examination showed that there were many (hundreds) non-adhesive almost clear eggs. The eggs sank to the bottom, but could easily be stirred up into the water by the slightest movement. The eggs were so tiny they went through all but my brine shrimp net. I watched for a while and finally noticed the male was eating eggs. I removed the male and female and the female was no longer fat. The eggs began taking on water and finally blew up to about 0.7 mm. Under the microscope the fertile eggs were already showing a cellular cap at about 3 hours age. The egg/embryo was central to a much larger clear area

(like a chicken egg or a tadpole egg).

The water temperature in the breeding tank was 76 degrees.

The next day the larva began to hatch at about noon and continued all day. The larvae look like other loach larvae, but much smaller. They were entirely clear with no eye, mouth, or gut apparent. They swam spasmodically, but often rested on their sides.

In order to see them develop, I removed the mop and box of gravel and set up a sponge filter. The hot magnum had sucked up many eggs. I recovered some of these, but I don't know if they were viable. Many of the eggs failed to develop and these had white embryos and larger than normal clear coverings and were more buoyant. Since it was clear that the fry were tiny and would need food smaller than brine shrimp, I put some lettuce in water in the window to get infusoria and bought some fry starter. When some of the fry showed evidence of eye and gut development and lacked apparent yolk (as viewed under a magnifying glass), I added about some "sponge grunge" and very small amounts of fry starter (the lettuce looked and smelled foul). In about another day I began to offer newly hatched brine shrimp. Over the next two days it was evident that they were eating brine shrimp and growing rapidly.

Once they were eating, the problem was space. By three weeks the 500 or so fry covered the bottom of their 10-gallon tank in a swirling constantly moving layer. Within a week of moving them to a 40-gallon long tank they were eating white worms, baby brine shrimp, CycloPese®, crushed trout chow and anything that went to the bottom of the tank. At age one month, I sold 200-250 of the loaches to Eric Bodrock and afterwards the tank looked almost as full as it had before we took his fish out. Now at two months they are like miniatures of their parents. Always hungry, they follow me in mass as I move by the tank, begging for food. They are not shy and are more likely to be on top of a proffered shelter as on the bottom.

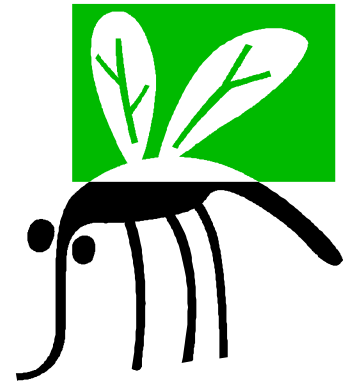
Some report that these loaches fight and kill one another. Besides the death of the first male and a couple of baby loaches added to the parent's tank, I have not seen evidence of excessive aggression. Perhaps that is because I keep them in large



numbers. It may be wise to get at least 6 to minimize aggression and also to enjoy their activities as they flit about the tank, much like the parent loaches. Someone I gave some babies to reported that they all died in his extremely hard well water. It may be advisable to take some time to acclimate these loaches to changes in water conditions. With these cautions, I can recommend these beautiful new loaches from India as pets and to fill out the "loach" requirement for BAP. ■

Mom, dad, and one baby Batik Loach.

Fighting West Nile Virus by the Allegheny Co. Health Department



This article suggests ways of treating landscape ponds, swimming pools and other permanent water sources to prevent mosquitoes and west Nile virus. Mosquitoes are a big nuisance and a health hazard for people and pets alike. An unused swimming pool, a landscape pond or other stagnant water feature in one yard can breed enough mosquitoes to infest the entire neighborhood. If you own such a water feature and would like to prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes, this outline is meant for you.

Attack Mosquitoes Where They Breed.

Any accumulation of water that persists for a week or so may serve as a breeding site for mosquitoes. If the water cannot be drained away or eliminated in some way, it must be chemically treated to control mosquitoes. Several products and sources for chemical water treatment are outlined below. However, these methods offer only a temporary fix. If at all possible, get rid of the stagnant water.

Biological (Bacterial & Microbial) Toxins. The most common biological pesticides found in hardware stores today are made from a naturally occurring soil bacteria called *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt for short. When ingested by a mosquito larva (the aquatic stage of a mosquito), the bacterium produces a crystal toxin that paralyzes and perforates the gut wall. The larval mosquito stops feeding and dies before reaching the adult, or biting stage. Bt products are not harmful to other aquatic organisms, people, pets or wildlife. They do not persist very long in the environment, so they must be reapplied as directed on the label.

Other biological mosquito control pesticides are made from similar bacterial species, such as *Bacillus sphaericus*. They all work within 24 hours and provide very safe and effective control of larval mosquitoes, without harmful effects on mammals, birds, fish or other aquatic insects.

Common Trade Names of mosquito control products that contain Bt or Bs; Bactimos Briquets, Mosquito Dunks, Mosquito Control Rings, Vectobac, Teknar, Skeetal, Vectolex.

Sources of Biological mosquito control products: local Loews Hardware, Home Depot, Busy Beaver, etc. Phone and mail order; Summit Chemical (1-800-227-8664), Arbico Garden Supply (1-800-827-BUGS), Gardener's Supply Co (1-800-863-1700), local Pest Control Companies that sell products "over the counter" and many local hardware stores.

Insect Growth Regulators (IGR's). Many insect growth regulators work by mimicking the insect hormones that govern normal growth and development. The effects are not immediately apparent, but they result in the failure of the adult insect to emerge from its juvenile state. Specifically, when water is treated with an IGR, larval mosquitoes do not die or even appear to be sick, but no adult mosquitoes will emerge from the water.

The most common IGR used for mosquito control contains methoprene, a chemical that mimics juvenile hormone. It has no impact on non-target fish, amphibians, birds or animals. In fact, fish, ducks and other animals may continue to feed on mosquito larvae that have been treated with an IGR without any impact on their health and development. Common Trade Names of mosquito control products that contain an IGR; Altosid, Zodiac PMC, Maverick, Pre-Strike. Sources for Mosquito IGR's; same as listed above for microbials.

Conventional Pesticide Products Typical lawn and garden insecticides, such as products that contain Pyrethrins, Permethrin, Resmethrin, Carbaryl and Malathion, can be formulated to control both the larval and adult stages of mosquitoes. However, these pesticides affect the nervous system of all animals. Malathion and carbaryl are extremely toxic to honey bees. Be sure to follow the specific label directions when mixing and applying these products.

Non-conventional Pesticides Larval mosquitoes in scrap auto tires can be killed with a few handfuls of rock salt. Just 3 drops of kerosene set on the surface of a 55-gallon drum of water will kill mosquito larvae by suffocation. Water on a

pool cover may be treated with liquid chlorine bleach or a floating chlorine tablet dispenser. However, these methods offer only a temporary fix. It is much better to drain off water sources, recycle scrap tires and to exclude mosquitoes from water holding containers with lids and screening.

These recommendations are provided only as a guide during a time when mosquito borne disease is imminent. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all label directions for any pesticide being used. No endorsement is intended for products mentioned, nor is criticism meant for products not mentioned. The author and the Allegheny County Health Department assume no liability resulting from the use of these recommendations. If you have any questions about the products or information provided in this document, please call the Housing and Community Environment Office at 412-350-4046. ■

Exchange Article

The Seven Deadly Sins of Pondkeeping by Greg Speichert

(This article originally published in *Water Gardening Magazine*, May/June 1998. Reprinted with permission Aquarticles)

1. Making the pond too small, too shallow, or too deep.

Many first-time pond builders do not realize how many gallons it takes to make up a square foot of water. Two hundred fifty gallons sounds like a lot at first, but it is only enough to fill an area about 4 foot square and 2 feet deep. The best rule of thumb is to make the pond as large as you can for the space where you want it to go. If you really do want to start out small with an in-ground pond, then line the pond with EPDM rubber liner, so that you can add on when you decide to expand the pond or install a stream or waterfall. When it comes to depth, check with pond owners in your area to find out what works best in your climate. If the pond is too shallow, it will be difficult to care for fish or plants. The same is true if the pond is too deep.

2. Buying a pump that's too low in capacity or too high in electrical use.

Measuring proper pump size is another matter that should be given thought and consideration. A cheaper pump with lower capacity may seem like a bargain when you are in the store, but once you bring it home and it barely powers a little fountain, it will not look like such a good deal any more. Make sure to pay close attention to the energy use of the pump. Buying a cheaper brand that uses a lot of electricity will end up costing you more money in less than a year's time. You will spend more money on your electric bill than you would have if you had simply bought a better pump. Invest in a good pump with a decent warranty. Avoid ones that are oil-cooled, since they can leak oil into the pond.

3. Making the water fall or stream too big or too small for the pond.

Adding a running water feature to a pond is wonderful idea. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to figure out how big to make the stream or waterfall. You have to keep in mind the amount of water that will be used by the water feature, because this will drain down the pond when the waterfall is running, and fill up the pond when the waterfall is turned off. There are excellent books on the market for waterfalls and streams. Buy them, borrow them from a friend, the pond club, or the local public library, and study them before you put in a running water feature for your pond.

4. Ringing the pond in stone so that it looks like a necklace.

A pond is not particularly attractive when it looks like it has been edged by the kind of jewelry that Wilma Rubble wore in the Flintstone cartoons. At our nursery, the display ponds have what we call "planting pockets." These are areas that are scooped out along the perimeter of the pond, so that we can fill them with soil and plant water plants in them. Smaller sized stones are then placed over the soil. You can even build a bog garden at the edge of the pond, and then from there link the pond to your perennial border. Try to make your pond look like it fits with the rest of your landscape.

5. Neglecting to use enough plants to help balance the pond.

You may think that we recommend using plants just because we sell the. Ask any water gardener if more plants have improved the balance in their pond, and they will tell you that the plants have worked wonders. Oxygenators help reduce algae growth in the spring, and several marginal plants will help keep it to a minimum throughout the summer. Plants are also beneficial because they help shade the pond and keep the water temperature cooler through the heat of the summer.

6. Expecting the pond to look like a swimming pool.

North Americans are known for their cleanliness, and the same is true when it comes to their ponds. New pond keepers are aghast when algae starts to grow and the water clarity turns cloudy. This is normal, and a certain amount of algae is inevitable. You just have to know how to handle it and how to keep it to a minimum. You will never get rid of it completely, however. At least not if you want to have a pond with fish, plants and other living creatures. For those who cannot tolerate a single particle of algae along the side of the pond, or who cannot stand the usual seasonal changes of water clarity, we recommend that they get rid of their fish and plants, and that they regularly add bleach. If they want fish or water lilies, we suggest ones made of plastic. Having a live pond is like having children – you learn to appreciate their core beauty and overlook dirt or untidiness around the edges.

7. Having either too many fish or not enough filtration.

Many gardeners decide to have ponds in their backyards because they want to have fish. The rest don't realize that fish are needed until after they have installed the pond. Putting too many fish in the pond, however, can be a disaster. It can seriously compromise the quality of water and place the lives of all of the fish in jeopardy. Too many fish can quickly foul the water, deplete the oxygen level, and change the ammonia levels to serious or even toxic. This is especially true in the middle of summer when pond temperatures rise during the day and drop at night. We use a conservative recommendation of one six-inch fish for every 100 gallons of pond water. If you want to have a lot of fish in your pond, then read everything you can find on fish health, maintenance, and water quality, and be prepared to add hard goods to your pond, such as filter units and ultraviolet sterilizers, to keep your pond water healthy for the fish! ■

Upcoming Events of Interest

- 7/22–25 ACA Convention, Denver, Colorado – (303) 429-5917 Mark Whitney
- 8/7–8 Akron Show, Tallmadge, Ohio (330) 848-3856 – Bud White
- 8/21–22 YATFS Weekend + Auction (330) 824-2653 – Curt Smith
- 8/28 **GPASI Picnic, North Park (see page 3)**
- 9/4 – 6 Killie Revue, Xenia, OH (513) 251-1569 Fritz Bazely
- 9/11-12 Loraine Show + Auction
- 9/18 Great Lakes Auction, Euclid, Ohio (440) 944-3245 – Ron Georgeone
- 9/25 Erie, PA Auction
- 10/3 Medina Ohio Auction (330) 723-4748 John Clark
- 10/14–16 All-Aquarium Catfish Convention, Laurel, MD. For more info, visit <http://www.pvas.com/catfish/welcome.htm>
- 10/17 YATFS Auction 330-824-2653 – Curt Smith
- 10/24 GPASI Auction!**
- 11/7 Akron Auction, Tallmadge, Ohio (330) 848-3856 – Bud White
- 11/19-21 Ohio Cichlid Assoc Show + Auction, Strongsville, OH (440) 236-6301 Marc DeWerth

Ongoing Reptile Swaps in Monroeville, PA Herb Ellerbach (412) 361-0835

Our friends from the Youngstown Area Tropical Fish Society (YATFS) regularly come to our shows and auctions.

Please support their upcoming Whale of a WEEKEND (no show) August 21-22, 2004. The event will be at the Lordstown Administration Building, 1455 Salt Springs Rd., Warren, Ohio 44481 (West of St. Rte. 45). You'll find speakers, manufacturers product displays, a banquet, rare fish raffle, and a giant fish & plant auction. Contact President Curt Smith with questions 330-824-2653. Curt will be speaking at our meeting in July.

Finformation July 2004

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The following national businesses and our local sponsors (listed on the back cover) have given GPASI the fuel it needs to have a great year. Please support all our sponsors and thank them for helping to make our show and our club a success.

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GPASI Marketplace

BUY

Armand Sichi wants to buy 4 used heaters submersible or hang on: two 100W and two 50W heaters. Please contact at 724-872-6760 or Asichi@verzion.net

Mike Parahus wants to buy up to 6 long-finned white cloud mountain minnows. He'd like a mix of males and females and is not interested in the "golden" variety. He would also like to buy up to 6 *Rasbora brigittae*. (724) 843-0584.

Lily Wasik is seeking common pond snails, juvenile to breeding age. She can be contacted at bpdlily@yahoo.com.

Ed Shilling is looking for Watkin goldfish. prhunter1@juno.com

FREE

Tobias Beck is a vet student at OSU with a huge interest in fish pathology and treatment. He is trying to find a suitable home for a 2.5' *Pseudodoras niger*. Its 180 gal tank has become quite restricting and it needs much larger quarters. It is in great health and quite beautiful as jumbo catfish go. Tobias has been unsuccessful at finding a public aquarium that will take him in and does not have the means or space to build an indoor pond to house him. Tobias is hoping that perhaps one of our members might have suitable facilities and desire to take over his care or have contacts at a public aquarium. Tobias would deliver him to a suitable home at no expense. Any suggestions or help would be greatly appreciated. (c) 614-531-8447, pvolitan@yahoo.com

Michael Moore is looking for someone to take a 9-inch pleco, a 9-inch bala shark, and a large red ear slider turtle. 724 654-8356. Michael lives in New Castle.

Do you have room for a 24-28 inch silver arrowana or a large orange and black Oscar? Call Barbara Clogarty at 724 875-2083. Barbara lives in Youngwood (near New Stanton).

SELL

When the arrowana and Oscar find homes (see above), Barbara is also looking for someone to buy her 265-gallon tank (comes with three filters, lights, heater, and an oak stand). \$900. 724 875-2083. Barbara lives in Youngwood (near New Stanton).

Walter Roth has plastic bags to sell in 100 count packages. Sizes are 6 x 12", 8 x 15", 10 x 20". Call (724) 449-9651.

Sharon Serbin designs and creates fish-related art: stained glass mosaic tables and wall hangings; tile mosaic floors; and hand-painted T-shirts and other clothes items. E-mail sjserbin@pgh.net or page her at (412) 949-3106.

Ross and Laura Cronkhite still have assorted tanks, plus airline and fittings, a few nets, and a supply of 5 gallon buckets and 4 and 5 quart ice cream buckets, and assorted stands. Contact (412) 233-0996 or lauross@libcom.com

To let other members know about aquarium-related items you'd like to buy, sell, or trade, contact Jean Grace at (412) 441-1106 or jgrace@pitt.edu.

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