

Showing Goldfish

- So, you want to show goldfish, but don't know where to start?
- Start by determining what you want to accomplish -
 - Do you want to win a major trophy?
 - Do you want to try showing fish for the 1st (or 2nd time)?
 - Do you want to become more active in the hobby?
- Depending on your answer, the results may be different

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- If you want to win a major trophy, then you need to focus on a few things:
 - Determine the variety that you want to show; most major trophies are won by Orandas, Ranchus, Lionheads and Ryukins
 - The fish should be large = greater than 5 inches
 - The color and deportment should be outstanding. Popular winning colors include calico, red and black, red and white, black & white, tri-color, red caps
 - Finnage should be as long as possible for Orandas and Ryukins; head-growth should be fully developed for Orandas, Ranchus, and Lionheads
 - Become familiar with the breed standards, so you know how to select fish, and what the judges are looking for

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- If you want to show fish for the 1st or 2nd time, then you need to focus on a few things:
 - Select your best fish, and bring them to the show. Don't worry about major categories, unless you have a really good fish
 - Walk around the show and meet vendors, other hobbyists, and judges to get an idea of how they started in goldfish
 - Learn, learn; learn – read books, attend meetings, look around the internet; read the GFSA breed standards
 - Have fun and look at all the fish – you will get tips from seeing other fish

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- If you want to become more active in the hobby, then you need to focus on a few things:
 - Join koi and goldfish clubs; obviously, the MPKS is a good choice to get you started; so is the GFSA (Goldfish Society of America) and CGFS (Canadian Goldfish Society)
 - Volunteer for goldfish show duties – there's always a need for help
 - Write articles, participate in shows; volunteer to help in judging a show
 - Start breeding fish; this is an excellent way to become familiar with the growth and development of

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- All that is great, but what do I do now? I want to show fish this year
 - Start preparing your fish now. Feed as much live food as possible in the next few weeks: earthworms, brine shrimp, string algae (are you nuts, why would I feed my fish string algae?). If live food is unavailable, then feed frozen food or high protein foods, such as krill or freeze-dried brine shrimp
 - Feed color enhancing foods. These will bring out the color in your fish. Foods containing spirulina won't cause the white to turn pink or yellow
 - Make sure your water quality is excellent; continue partial water changes, and watch (and monitor) ammonia and nitrates. Red, streaky fins are a sign of water quality problems, and won't show well

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- All that is great, but what do I do now? I want to show fish this year
 - Take fish off feed 1 week prior to the show. This is done for practical reasons: fish don't look good when polluting their tank, and showing fish produces some stress on the fish
 - If possible, bring fish inside a few days before the show to make sure that they are okay. Don't show fish with obvious signs of disease, torn or frayed fins, or external parasites
 - If you can't bring fish in before the show, make sure you inspect them carefully before you bring them to the show
 - To transport fish to the show, place fish in a plastic bag with just enough water to cover the dorsal fin, then fill remainder of bag with oxygen
 - Put 3 - 4 large fish in a large bag; 5 - 7 small to medium sized fish in a medium bag. Place the bags in a fish box, or other storage box to transport them to the show
 - If you're coming from a distance involving 2 or more hours of travel, place a small amount of Amquel (or similar product) in the bag with the fish before sealing the bag
 - If you're coming from a distance greater than 2 hours, be sure to have a supply of oxygen on hand in case the fish show signs of distress

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- Here are Some Things that you Shouldn't do:
 - Don't show sick fish – ever
 - If you buy a fish directly from a breeder for the purpose of showing the fish, don't enter the fish directly in the show the day the breeder arrives (unless the breeder is local). Make sure to get the fish before the show date, so you can bring it home and acclimate it. Too many fish die as a result of being transported 3 – 4 times during and after a show. Besides, the fish will be screwed up and won't show well
 - You don't have to heavily salt goldfish after a show (some people do this with Koi, but Koi are larger and more tolerant of a salt bath than goldfish). If you want to salt your fish, do it gradually by adding salt to the tank in which the fish are kept – after you get home
 - Don't be disappointed if you don't win a major trophy the 1st (or 2nd) time you show fish. Make sure you understand why the winning fish won, and start making plans for next year's show (learn from the winners)
 - Don't give up