

# Toronto Koi for Beginners

## Pond Setup Checklist & First-Year Guide

A printable checklist for first-time Japanese koi owners in Toronto, Markham, and the Greater Toronto Area. Everything we walk new customers through before they buy their first koi — pond specs, filtration, stocking, seasonal care, and a Niigata-import buying checklist.

### 1 · Pond specifications

- Volume: **minimum 1,500 gallons** for a first koi pond in the GTA.
- Depth: **at least 4 feet** so koi rest below the Ontario ice line in winter.
- Shape: rounded corners; bare-bottom or smooth liner is easier to clean in year one.
- Location: partial shade preferred; avoid overhanging deciduous trees.
- Access: leave one side clear for netting, water changes, and vet visits.

### 2 · Filtration & water flow

- Biological filter sized for **2× your projected bio-load** (leave headroom).
- Mechanical pre-filter (settlement chamber or drum) upstream of the bio filter.
- Bottom drain plumbed to filter — dramatically reduces solids.
- Full pond turnover every **1–2 hours** in summer.
- UV clarifier sized for turnover rate — critical for a first-summer pond.
- Dedicated aerator with 2+ air stones for redundancy.

### 3 · Water quality baseline

- Ammonia: **0 ppm** · Nitrite: **0 ppm** · Nitrate: < 40 ppm.
- pH: **7.2–8.4**, stable (stability matters more than target).
- KH: **above 100 ppm** to buffer pH swings.
- Temperature: 60–75°F (16–24°C) ideal summer band.
- Chlorine/chloramine dechlorinator on hand for every top-up.
- Master test kit (liquid, not strips) plus digital thermometer.

## 4 · Stocking your first Toronto pond

- Start with **3–5 koi** in a 1,500-gallon pond; add more after the filter matures.
- Allow **250 gallons per adult koi** once fully grown.
- Beginner varieties: **Chagoi, Ochiba Shigure, Yamabuki Ogon, Kohaku, Sanke.**
- Size class: Tosai (1yr, 4–8") or Nisai (2yr, 10–14") for a first pond.
- Quarantine every new fish for 3–4 weeks before adding to the main pond.

## 5 · Niigata-import buying checklist

- Named Japanese breeder disclosed (Sakai, Dainichi, Marudo, etc.).
- Year class (Tosai / Nisai / Sansai) confirmed in writing.
- Clear video from **above (dorsal) and side view.**
- Quarantine and health-check documentation on arrival in Canada.
- Written arrive-alive policy for shipped fish.
- Fair 2026 CAD price for the size (see /koi-price-estimator).

## 6 · Seasonal calendar (Ontario)

| Season           | Water temp | What to do                                                                                          |
|------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spring (Apr–May) | 5–15°C     | Restart filter · test ammonia/nitrite weekly · introduce wheatgerm above 10°C · watch for parasites |
| Summer (Jun–Aug) | 18–26°C    | Full high-protein feeding · weekly water tests · shade against algae blooms · check aeration        |
| Autumn (Sep–Oct) | 10–18°C    | Switch to wheatgerm · net over pond · remove leaves daily · reduce feeding below 15°C               |
| Winter (Nov–Mar) | 0–8°C      | Stop feeding below 10°C · run de-icer + surface aerator · never smash ice · monthly top-ups only    |

## 7 · Beginner budget (2026 CAD)

| Item                                        | Range                |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Pond build (1,500 gal, DIY liner)           | \$6,000 – \$12,000   |
| Pond build (professional installation, GTA) | \$18,000 – \$60,000+ |
| Filtration + UV + aerator                   | \$1,500 – \$4,500    |
| Water test kit + dechlorinator (yearly)     | \$150 – \$300        |

|                                        |                   |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| First 3–5 Japanese koi (Tosai / Nisai) | \$1,500 – \$7,500 |
| Food (yearly)                          | \$200 – \$600     |

**Ready to buy?** Browse current Japanese-import inventory at [maplecrownkoi.com/collection](https://maplecrownkoi.com/collection) or contact us at [info@maplecrownkoi.com](mailto:info@maplecrownkoi.com) · 647-982-4219 to have us hand-pick a starter set for your pond.