A Greener View: Tips for replanting grapevines

by Jeff_Rugg

Q: Early this spring I noticed the top 6 inches of my one-year-old grapevine had snapped off. I stuck the top part into a flower vase with water, and to my surprise roots began to grow and leaves started to form. Both the roots and leaves appear to be very healthy.

How do I go about transplanting it to the garden? Can I simply dig a hole and stick it in the soil, or is there some preparation required to help it grow?

Do I need to transition it first? And when would be the best time?

A: Grapevines tend to be easy to propagate from hardwood cuttings such as yours. Now that your cutting has roots, it can be planted at any time.

Wait until after the last frost date for your area in order to protect the new leaves that aren't used to the cold. Loosen the garden soil for 1 or 2 feet around the spot you want to plant it in the garden. Mix in a little organic matter if the soil needs it. Plant it about halfway in the ground. Water regularly and use a balanced fertilizer several times over the summer.

Your grapevine will have a top and bottom that are from the same plant. Because it rooted so easily, there should be plenty of root growth. Some types of grapes root poorly and are grafted onto short stems with good root systems. If few roots or no roots grow from a grape cutting, then it will have to be grafted.

Hardwood cuttings are the cuttings from last year's growth. Softwood cuttings would be from this year's green stems. Although they might root, the hardwood cuttings are better. The various grape varieties were originally brought to this country by enterprising people who usually used hardwood cuttings.

Q: We have built a water garden in our yard and there are a few small goldfish. We want to add some koi, but are confused about all the different kinds.

Are there some kinds that will be better than others?

We don't know what all the koi names mean.

A: To be blunt, Koi are just colored carp, which is like saying that a German shepherd is just a dog. The various color patterns do not differ on their care, but you could decide that you think some colors are prettier than others.

About a 100 years ago, people discovered black carp and red carp. After a lot of crossbreeding over the past years, there are now about 100 specific color groupings, but only a few are popular.

Some fish are one color, some two and some three. There are even a few with as many as five colors. They are named in Japanese, and mostly mean what you see. Such as the Japanese word, Kohaku, which simply means that you are looking at a red and white fish.

In Japan, the most popular color pattern is the Kohaku. It is simple and elegant. In the U.S., there are three color patterns vying for No. 1: Kohaku, Sanke and Showa.

Kohaku is a white fish with a red pattern on it. The red pattern can be a single patch of color or it can be several patches. Each patch and the total of all patches should be artistically arranged. A row of colored blobs is not interesting to look at.

The Sanke is a Kohaku color pattern with black added. It is a three-colored fish. It is white first, then red with a small amount of black added on the body. The underlying Kohaku pattern needs to be well done, so the black can be artistically arranged on top.

The Showa is also a three-color fish. It is the same three colors as the Sanke, so it confuses some people. The Showa is a black fish with added red and white. It has black on the head, and black that wraps around the body in bands on older versions of Showa or just large patches of black on newer versions.

Older versions were predominantly black with an artistic arrangement of white and red. On the other hand, newer versions have all three colors more equally abundant. The black on the head is well received if it is an interesting lightning bolt pattern. Showa should also have a bit of black on the two pectoral fins, which are closest to the head.

OK, now let's go back to the one-colored koi. A plain white or plain yellow fish may not sound too exciting, but these two colors are showy in pond water and attract a lot of attention. The plain yellow is called a Yamabuki Ogon, while the plain white is a Platinum Ogon. There are also all black or brown koi, but they can be hard to see in a pond.

In two-colored koi, the most popular are the black and white, and the black and red. Unfortunately, the name depends on whether the fish was black and the other colors were added, or if it was the other color first and the black was added.

A Becko is typically a white fish with an artistic arrangement of a few black spots on the back but none on the head.

A Shiro Utsuri is a black fish with white patches in a nearly 50-50 arrangement with black on the head.

A Hi Utsuri is a black fish with a fifty=fifty arrangement of red.

The Tancho Koi is special. It has a single red patch of color only on the head. It is named Tancho after a revered type of crane found in Japan that has a red crown. The Japanese flag has a single round red sun on a white background.

A Tancho Kohaku with an almost-round red patch centered on the head is unique. The red patch can also be somewhat artistic in shape, such as a diamond or octagon. The pattern of red may also appear on the Sanke and the Showa.

The white on the best koi has been described as the color of fresh snow, or as the white in a fresh hardboiled egg or in fresh milk. The black on the best koi is the jet black of a lacquered Japanese wooden box. The red on a koi encompasses all the shades of red and orange, just like a redhead is more of an orange color.

All good color is pure. The same shade on the head and the body does not bleed into the other colors, or have patches of shades or tints.

All colors that form patterns on multicolored koi should have sharp clean edges. The back edge of a color (towards the tail of the fish) can be scalloped per each scale or can meander around. The front edge of a color can have a bleeding of color, especially as white scales overlap onto the other colors. White scales are more transparent; therefore, the other colored scale underneath the white one can be seen.

Have fun picking out a few colorful koi for your pond.

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