2. Food Fish – Carp

Common Name(s):
Common Carp
Species: *Cyprinus carpio*

Carp are ideal for home food production. They are omnivorous and will eat a huge range of foods including worms and vegetable scraps. They are also very hardy fish tolerating very low oxygen levels and will survive cold winter periods if you decide not to heat your system.

History: Carp have long been popular as a food fish. They have been reared for over 2000 years in China and were a luxury food for the Romans who kept them in large purpose built storage ponds. Domestication of carp was spread across Europe by Christian monks who kept the fish in ponds for food, selecting the largest fish for breeding and subsequently carrying out artificial selection, albeit unintentionally. Common Carp have now been introduced to almost every part of the world and it is currently the third most cultured finfish species globally.

Physiology: Long and flat body with large scales. Thick, projecting lips. Two pairs of barbels at the angle of mouth and shorter ones on the upper lip. Colour varies from golden yellow, silver to brownish-green depending on the minerals in the water and the level of penetrating sunshine. Males are smaller than females, carp can grow to a maximum length of 1.2m and maximum weight of over 40kg.

Diet: Carp are omnivorous and will eat almost anything, saying this they have a strong preference for consuming invertebrate food such as water insects, insect larvae, worms, mollluscs and zooplankton. Carp will also eat the stalks, leaves and seeds of aquatic and terrestrial plants, and decaying vegetation.

Growth Rate: The daily growth rate of carp can be between 2 - 4% of body weight. Carp can reach 600g – 1kg in 12 months in a heated system. They can survive lower winter temperatures but will take 2-3 times longer to reach harvest size.

Common Carp: 23-30°C

D.O. mg/l	pH Units	Un-Ionised Amonia mg/l	Nitrite mg/l	Nitrate mg/l	Hardness mg/l	Alkalinity mg/l	CO_2 mg/l	Salinity ppt	Chloride mg/l
1-10	6.5-9	0-0.04	0-0.2	<50	50-350	50-250	0-30	0-3000	0-5