

# Selecting Asagi or Shusui

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## Shusui

Selecting an Asagi at an early age requires you to look at several aspects. First look at the body's "netting." It should be light at a young age, as the netting tends to darken with time. It should have a nice indigo blue-type color. It may get too dark and lose the scale outline, if the netting starts off too dark. The netting should also be in very even rows. As there is no pattern on the back to fool us, one needs to see a very clear outline around each scale. For the same reason, avoid gin rin scales on a young Asagi, as these generally remain and can be distracting when the koi grows.

Next, look for a clear, white nose. Sometimes the skull shows through Asagi at an early age, but if the nose is white the head will normally also clear up. If the nose is cloudy, the head tends to be not as clear and can spring up black speckles.

Pectoral fins should be all or mostly red. The red on the pectoral fins generally pulls back to form a nice Motoaka as the koi matures. The tail can be clear or have some red. Look for red eyes.

Hi on the side of the body tends to emerge higher on the fish as Asagi mature, so pick one that is down a little further to begin with. It is preferable to have an even straight ending line where the Hi comes up the side. Then, a white line dividing the red from the blue net on top is also preferable. A nice even net pattern with each scale outlined uniformly should top off the blue. Check the shoulder region to make sure the netting comes all the way up to the head crease. It should all form in uniform rows down the body.

Young Asagi should have some red on the cheeks. The ideal finish of this red is to come up the back of the gill cover then along the side of the head to form a horseshoe on both sides.



# Asagi

Look for a strong body to give you the edge in a show. If you want to try breeding koi, Asagi breed very true and can be easier for a beginner.

When picking a Shusui, follow the same rules as for an Asagi, except a Shusui is a mostly scaleless fish. Instead of looking for an even net pattern, look for an even set of scales along the backbone of the fish. These should have that same indigo blue color and should be uniform along the back with no missed spaces. Beware of Mudagoke – an extra, or stray, scale outside this nice even row. Muda means waste and it is a wasteful scale outside this line along the backbone. Mudagoke detracts from the quality of a Shusui.

Originally Shusui had the same Hi (only below the lateral line) as Asagi. But modern Shusui can have red above the lateral line if it maintains balance from side to side. Finnacle and early head and nose color are the same as for selecting Asagi. Shusui – because of the scaleless skin – are even more prone to having undesirable black freckles, known as Jyami.

Happy Koi Hunting! ❖

*Thank you to Carl Forss, Koi by Keirin, for providing the Asagi and Shusui pictures for this article.*