

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

Volume 5, Issue 7

August 1, 2002



A blue heron stands watch during the potluck supper at the Taliaferro's pond.

SW Member's Only Pond Tour

By Diane Gruver

A little heat wave doesn't stop dedicated water gardeners! No siree! We braved 100 plus degree temperatures on the hottest Sunday of the year to tour eight lovely ponds in the southwest part of Topeka on July 21st.

The tour started at Doug and Marikay Peterman's after lunch where about 40 of us gathered to see their lily-laden pond and surrounding landscaping. I'm envious of the Peterman's beautiful lilies and wish we had both the space and sun to sustain them. Their "Mary's bush" was a topic of conversation too. Seems Mary Ann Bechtold gave them a start of this plant a few years ago and nobody knew the name until recently. Marikay says it's tandaman sedum, or something like that. It's a ferny plant with yellow flowers. Their 20+ pair of martins didn't seem to mind the tall bamboo growing close to their house, but they did mind the intruders in the back yard and they let us know about it. Doug does intense vegetable gardening, stacking things in so close together that I don't know how he squeezes through the rows. Very interesting.

Our next stop was at the home of Jerry and Carol Hornecker where they had a lotus with four or five blooms on it. I feel lucky to get ONE on ours! They can enjoy a pond from either side of their house as they have one in the front yard and two in the backyard. The backyard ponds are connected with a

Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m., Wed., Aug. 21, 2002

Ward Meade Park

Jeff Yeckel, River City Koi

Koi/Fish Disease

bridge to a gazebo – very nice.

Dean and Randy Demoss have a layout that, well, let's say it has lots of character! They have several nice ponds with lilies, lotus, frogs and toads and lots of flowerbeds. You can wonder through the large landscaped area and view yard art that stretches your imagination. Rose moss grows out of birdhouse gourds, clematis climbs a wire trellis lined with skulls (not human of course), and gazing (bowling) balls add color to flower beds. A decorated claw bathtub holds lilies and marginals, and the secluded front porch of their over 100 year old stone house is an experience in itself. It's a place to return to when you have more time to really absorb everything. I doubt that you could ever "see" it all. It's definitely an enjoyable unique experience. Floyd says they have their own little botanical garden and should charge an entrance fee.

Tom and Helen Platis have a neat water garden (named Chewy's Pond by their daughter- but that's another story) with a streambed. It's loaded with fish, frogs, plants and has an abundance of anacharis in the center that is quite impressive. (Tom says it's planted in pots.) They have an unusual turtle that is an upside down GI Joe (better known as a steel pot) helmet with face and feet attached. Cute.

Although not a scheduled stop, the group made a quick stop at Weinbeck's Water Gardens about a mile down the road from Platis's. Tom is a new member and was glad to have us stop by. He had some beautiful tropical red flare lilies that really caught Floyd's eye. (We just might get a new lily – only problem is I have to figure out which one to get rid of to make room for it!)

Jon and Mary Pat Fischer have a neatly camouflaged new custom-made filtering system that Jon says really works well! The waterfall has been changed from one end to the other to come from the new filter. The pond features lythrum, pickerel, lilies and cattails. Mary Pat's hanging gazing ball has always had a fascination for me. So unusual.

Bob and Becky Coffman have two ponds with a bridge in the middle. They have some large koi, black taro, cannas, cattails, a pink/white variegated leaf hardy water lily and a beautiful blue tropical lily. Bob has rigged up a bird feeder inside a birdcage so that only small birds can have access to the thistle. Very ingenuitive.

Bob and Cheryl Saathoff have a lovely shaded garden on the banks of the Shunga Creek. The two water gardens are joined by a stream that runs under a walkway and spills over a huge drop (making an impressive waterfall) into a very shaded pond formed by a 6-foot rock wall. The lower area is landscaped with hostas and other shade loving plants and has a gazebo large enough to hold numerous people. A wonderful place to cool off, relax and visit. Very nice.

Our last stop was at Don and Ruth Taliaferro's whose landscape also borders the Shunga (on the other side of the creek). They have two beautiful ponds separated by a bridge with a path that leads off into the woods on a trail that will eventually join with two of their neighbors. Don said their shade garden is a work in progress. (Aren't all gardens?) Their neighbors were kind enough to let us tour their huge shade garden with beautiful trees, hostas, ferns, impatiens, a bubbler and other interesting features. Since they are near the creek, raccoons are a problem for the Taliaferro's and Don said they have trapped numerous coons. If I remember correctly, he said they trapped 15 in one week! A majestic fake blue heron guards the ponds and watched quietly as our tired, hot hungry group enjoyed a delicious pot luck supper in the shade of the huge trees. It was a delightful ending to a nice day (albeit hot!) fun day. Floyd said he heard a few comments about "pond dipping" that afternoon, but I didn't see anything in the ponds except plants, frogs and fish.

Many thanks to the TAWGS members that shared their ponds and to the members who toured and endured the heat to show their appreciation for their fellow pond friends.

It was a great afternoon! And we look forward to seeing everyone on the northeast pond tour on August 11th starting at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Joe and Rita Sutcliff, 3038 NE 27th. But be forewarned, we might not get to tour their pond as they had a "pond disaster" when the electricity went off while they were in Greece for 2 weeks. Still, it will be our meeting point for the tour. See you then!

From the president

By Mary Ann Bechtold

It was only yesterday that I was complaining about the cold weather setting me back on getting the flower beds up and going. Now I would welcome some of that cool weather and rain. The birds are starting to frequent the pond so much that you can actually see trends and know the time of day by who arrives at what time and at what spot.

Welcome to the newest members. I really appreciate how you are getting involved and stepping forward helping us continue to support each others interest in water gardening. This is the time of year we really learn from each other's mistakes and successes so I hope to have more time during the meeting for "story telling."

Please consider taking a committee chair or an office for next year. Now is the time to shadow the current person in that position. The tasks are not that involved and the club needs all of you to participate so the rest of us can enjoy the meetings from your seats. Having been an officer, we will appreciate you even more. Thanks.



A mama duck enjoys swimming in the pond that TAWGS built at Midland Hospice.

Midland Hospice Water Garden Update

By Joe Breitenstein

The water garden is doing quite well and is greatly appreciated by the patients, their families and the staff. They put out food for the fish, ducks and squirrels. There are several Koi and the right number of goldfish and Shubunkins. The Lotus and water lilies have been blooming. Marginals have been added and the pond looks very well for being less than a year old.

Although TAWGS has not officially assumed responsibility for additional landscaping and continuing care, some members have voluntarily donated and planted additional annuals and perennials. Pat and Dick Rokey have donated plants and materials and put in a lot of hours. Mary Bechtold, Becky Coffman and I have also helped.

Despite the less than ideal soil and this year's weather conditions, the plants are maturing and providing good growth with a continuing variety of colors and textures. Unfortunately, we have a significant problem with invasive plants such as Bermuda grass, bindweed, nutgrass and dandelions. These plants need to be killed before they become an even greater problem.

I go out to Midland Hospice every other day to check the water garden, water the plants and refill the large fountain on the patio. I also water the two Garden Council flower beds and the ornamental sweet potato vines near the southwest corner of Hospice House.

I will be out of town from August 13 through August 24 and would appreciate someone taking over these responsibilities during that time. I would also appreciate some assistance in killing the invasive weeds and doing minimal deadheading. The hours can be very flexible to fit your schedule.

My phone number is 266-6618 and my e-mail is JBreite@aol.com. Thanks!

Project voting results

By Joe Weir

The preliminary voting results are in for the 2002 pond project. Half of the members voted to donate monies to a charity of our choice, and half of the members voted to build a pond. Most people I've talked to, think we can do both.

The number one choice receiving the most "first choices" was the Ronald McDonald house with 27 votes and 12 first choice votes. Becky Coffman volunteered to research what kind of feature that they would like. It will probably be a simple indoor fountain, and rather inexpensive to accommodate their needs.

The next three top choices were very close in voting results. The VA hospital with 23 votes and 8 first choice votes. Stormont Vail (in the courtyard) with 21 votes and 3 first choice votes. Lake Shawnee with 17 votes and 7 first choice votes. Jim Green volunteered to research the VA Hospital and its needs. Becky Coffman will check into Stormont Vail, and Dave Puff will make contact with Lake Shawnee.

Proper aquatic coverage

By Diane Gruver

Proper plant coverage to help maintain the control of algae was the topic of David Puff's presentation at the July TAWGS meeting. David said that a 60 to 70 percent coverage is a good rule to follow unless you have a shaded pond in which case you can get by with a little less coverage. More is not always better either, because too much coverage isn't good either. Too much coverage will keep the heat from escaping and when the water temperature reaches 95 this makes the oxygen level go down, which is harmful to your fish, especially if you're overstocked.

Water lilies and lotus and floaters such as water hyacinths and water lettuce, and submerged plants such as anacharis all help establish an eco-balance which is the most effective way to achieve an algae free pond.

There are several factors to consider when determining how much coverage a lily will provide: the variety, the time of the year, the size of the pot and the fertilizer used. Some lilies can cover from 30 – 50 square feet he said. When repotting a lily, David likes to use a special mix recipe that he has developed, a 6-inch rizeone and a 16-inch pot. Lilies will perform best the first year using this method and will slow down the

second year because they get root bound. David's mix includes heavy clay, manure, bone meal and fertilizer. Do NOT use potting soil for your aquatic plants, it will float out of the pot and muddy up the pond.

"If it's hard to get the fertilizer tab pushed clear to the bottom of the pot, then it's time to re-pot," David said. He suggested that although most of us repot in the spring, repotting in the summer time helps get the lily started early for the next growing season. Summer repotting can also help reduce the percentage of coverage if you have too many lilies and don't know which ones to give up. Lilies and lotus should be fertilized monthly during the growing season to help maintain beautiful blooms. David prefers using the Highland Rim fertilizer tab, which has a higher phosphorous rate and doesn't dissolve in water as quickly as Pond Tabs. When fertilizer dissolves in the water it just feeds the algae David said. Be sure that you have 45 days of growing season left when you repot it, however.

"A lot of people are building their own bio-filters these days," David said. "A real good custom built bio-filter will eliminate the need for 60 – 70 percent coverage." A custom built bio-filter will house more media than the average factory bio-filter and can be partially buried or put in a remote location he said. It will eliminate the need for as many plants and also allow for a heavier fish load. Two things to remember when making a bio-filter are: use polyester filter matting instead of furnace filters which are made of fiberglass; activated charcoal is different than Kingsford charcoal – don't use Kingsford in your pond!

Submerged plants (anacharis) are good natural filters. They also provide a place for babies and provide food for fish in the wintertime. Generally one bunch per square foot of pond surface is recommended. It can either be planted in a pot or weighted with lead to keep it from floating to the surface and into a skimmer. Most submerged plants require some sun.

Floaters such as water hyacinths and water lettuce are characterized by trailing roots that absorb nutrients from the water. If hyacinths are happy, they will reproduce rapidly and can be shared with friends or tossed into the compost pile. Sharing with consenting pond members is fine, but please don't share them at Gage Park or Lake Shawnee, as they can cause severe problems because they are so prolific. Hyacinths like to be crowded and can be encouraged to bloom by placing them in a ring fashioned out of tubing, weed eater plastic line or hoops.

Although marginals are not particularly counted in the percentage of coverage, they play a very important role in the eco-balance, David said, especially if they are planted in pea gravel or placed in streambeds where water flows through the roots.

A charter member and founding father of

TAWGS, David in an experienced water gardener and has developed a bio-filter booklet which describes in detail how to build your own bio filter. It is available from TAWGS who receive the sole profit from the sale of the booklet. David helps his wife Ruth at Puff Water Gardens.

Fountain Maintenance List

The following volunteers have said that they would do the maintenance at the fountain at Ward Meade Park.

Aug. Bob & Becky Coffman, Dick & Pat Rokey, Dean Demoss

Sept. Jim Green, David Puff, Gerald Hodges, Dean Demoss

Many thanks to all of you!!

July 17, 2002 TAWGS Minutes

President Mary Ann Bechtold called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. We had several guests present as well as new members Duane and Mary Eberhardt, Mike and Regina Stock, and Mary Beth and Don Figgins. VP Joe Weir said he was passing out a list of suggestions for the 2002 Project and he would like for members to select their choices so he could tabulate them during the meeting. r member and Founding Father David Puff gave an interesting program about the proper coverage for your pond.

Following delicious refreshments of strawberry shortcake provided by David and Ruth Puff and Bob and Cheryl Saatholf, the meeting resumed with approval of the minutes as published in the July Lily Pad. Secretary Diane gave the treasurer's report in the absence of Tom Platis. She said that we have a total of \$7,440.21, including \$5,304 in checking, \$2,092.43 in a money market and \$43.34 in petty cash.

Diane gave a report on the recent pond tour, thanking the pond hosts, committee members and volunteers who all helped make the tour a success. She said that the income from the tour added \$3,934.42 to the treasury. She reported that the committee decided in their wrap up committee meeting that the tour should be held the third weekend in June in the future. Their recommendation is that the tour chairman and committee be in place before November so that plans can be underway early. They also recommend that we investigate the possibility of tying volunteer hours to be used as a discount for a possible TAWGS bus tour next year. Joe Breitenstein told the group how much he enjoyed working as a pond tour volunteer said that he hoped that next year more people would take the opportunity to meet and greet people on the tour.

Joe B. said that he has enough help to set up tables for the flower show on July 26th but he still needs some help with refreshments for the August 5th Garden Council meeting at Ward Meade Park. Joe will be there at 7:00 a.m. to receive cookies from TAWGS members. Be sure to put your name on containers that need to be returned. President Mary Ann would like to borrow a

fish platter if anyone has one. People are welcome to stay and the program is on drying flowers. Joe reported that he has a key to the cabinet outside Ward Meade where items for fountain maintenance can be stored. He will give it to those in charge during the summer and wants the key back this winter. He also reported that he opened the doors to the library and people can check out garden books to be returned next month.

Jim Haugh who is taking over the web site reported that we are ready to move to the new host site. Eileen Schmidt, who has been handling the website, which was hosted free by her husband's company, had asked to be relieved of the webmaster duties and asked that the site be moved. Jim Green moved and Jon Fischer seconded that we pay \$120 a year to Phoenix Engineering to host the web site. Motion carried. Jim said that the new design should be up and running in the next few months and encouraged people to send their pond pictures to him.

Jon Fischer passed out maps for the SW Member Only Pond Tour July 21st beginning at Peterman's at 1:00 and ending with Taliaferro's with a pot luck supper. Diane passed out maps for the NE Member Only Pond Tour August 11th, beginning at Sutcliff's at 1:00 and ending with a pot luck at Puff's. Members are asked to bring lawn chairs, table service and a covered dish to both tours.

Joe Weir reported that it was about evenly split between donating tour funds for a community water feature project or building a pond in the community. Top choices were the Ronald McDonald House, Stormont Vail, Lake Shawnee and another Hospice. Committee members will do more investigating into those four choices and report at the next meeting.

Jim Green reported that he and Diane had picked up the pre-form pond and waterfall, pump, and stand at Sam's Club this month and it is stored at Larry and Caryn Sheets. It will be used in the booth at the Lawn and Garden Show next year.

David Puff moved and Mike Bradley seconded that a chairman be appointed for the fountain maintenance committee. He felt it was necessary for someone to coordinate the volunteers that have already signed up for this year. Motion carried. Dean Demoss volunteered to be chairman.

Becky Coffman urged members to be thinking about who will be the chairman of the pond tour committee next year. She thinks the committee and chairman should be in place by next month.

A possible bus tour was discussed with ideas such as the Wichita Lawn and Garden Show or the Wichita Botanical gardens being a one day trip that might be considered. No action was taken.

Bob Coffman suggested that it would probably be a good idea to have a budget in place so that the club knows how much money it needs to operate each year and where that money is going. No action was taken.

Susan and Stan Wilch and Dan and Carol Neill volunteered to bring refreshments next month. David

Puff announced that he has found a source for the soft strips of lead used to weight anacharis.

Meeting adjourned.

Watch the water temperature!

Reprinted from 8-2-01 Splash

In many parts of the country the temperatures have been really HOT! This means that the water temperature in your pond is correspondingly high! There are some precautions to take to make sure your fish stay healthy during these extreme temperatures:

- 1) Do not run the waterfall/fountain 24 hours. Many a pond owner woke in the morning and all his fish were dead from lack of oxygen after the pumps were turned off during the night or while away from home. Hot weather depletes the oxygen supply in the water
- 2) Do not feed the fish when water temps are above 82 degrees Fahrenheit. Fish, just like us, need to eat light in extreme temperatures because their digestive system is more sensitive. This is particularly true for Koi. Feed early in the morning. It is even a good idea to switch to Spring/Fall food because it is easier to digest during hot spells.

How to size a filter for the pond

Reprinted from 7-20-01 Splash

A filter's performance in keeping a pond is directly related to correct sizing of the chosen filtration system. Here are some important points to consider:

- 1) Calculate the volume of the pond as correctly as possible
- 2) Add 15 % for ponds located in warmer climates (south of the Mason/Dixon line in the U.S.)
- 3) Add another 15% if the depth of the pond is less than 2 feet
- 4) Add 20% if the pond is home to Koi
- 5) Add 10% if the pond receives more than 6 hours of direct sunlight

Keep in mind that a filter in most instances will not by itself eliminate green water. Green water is caused by algae plants that are so tiny that they whiz right through a filter.

The only mechanical device that will eliminate green water for sure is an Ultra-Violet Clarifier and it should be sized the same as filters (described above).

It does help to make sure that the pH in the pond is as close to neutral as possible (7.0) and that a good bacterial colony is established.

Do not clean your filter material in chlorinated tap water, the chlorine will destroy the beneficial bacteria. It is not necessary to get the filter sparkling clean. A filter actually does a better job if it is not too clean. The filter should not be allowed to clog and should be cleaned regularly, but not to the point of eliminating all beneficial bacteria.

Sympathy extended

We extend sympathy to Rita and Joe Sutcliff on the death of Rita's father recently.



Congratulations!

Congratulations go to three of our member couples for placing in the 2002 Greater Topeka Landscape Contest!

Pat and Dick Rokey won first place in the Shade Garden Division, Bob and Cheryl Saathoff won second in the Water Garden Division and Gerald and Donnis Hodges won Honorable Mention in the Water Garden Division.

Way to go guys and gals!

Pond plant problems

Reprinted from 7-12-01 Splash

Often, the problems with our pond plants tell us about other problems in the pond as well:

Very light green leaves, for example, are often an indication that the pH in the pond is too high. When the pH is too high the plants do not thrive and neither does anything else.

Water Hyacinths do not bloom: Turn them upside down and check the roots. They should be 4" to 6" long. If they are short, stubby and white then your fish are munching on them. Distract your fish with other greens like duckweed, or for Koi even iceberg Lettuce or Water Cress.

Water Lilies and Lotus do not bloom: fertilize regularly with fish safe aquatic fertilizer tablets (we fertilize ours every three weeks during the blooming season).

Water Lily leaves have black spots and seem to dissolve: The lily may be getting splashed by the waterfall or fountain. Move the plant to a quieter spot.



Adding fish to the pond

Reprinted from 8-10-01 Splash

Here is a tip for adding new fish to a new pond: ...add the fish a couple at a time! The natural beneficial bacteria colony has to have time to grow and adjust to the waste produced by the fish. Adding too many fish at once will cause a nitrite spike and kill your fish!

Refrain from feeding the fish for the first couple of days and then start very slowly!

Notice

Please be sure to check the date on your mailing label. It will tell you when your dues are due and how much they are. If you are over two months past due, you will be dropped from the newsletter mailing list.

Also, if you would prefer receiving the Lily Pad by e-mail please e-mail the editor at fdgruver@holtonks.net or diane@kansasco-op.coop. Thanks!

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society
 4111 NW 16th
 Topeka, KS 66618

2002 Calendar of Events

August 11 NE Members Only Pond Tour
 August 18 Garden City Pond Tour
 August 21 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
 Sept. 15 SE Members Only Pond Tour
 Sept. 18 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
 Oct. 6 Apple Fest
 Oct. 16 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
 Nov. 20 TAWGS Monthly Meeting

2003

June 21-22 Topeka 12th Annual Pond Tour

FUN (POND) FACT



Reprinted from 8-2-01 Splash

Once birds locate a steady and suitable water source they will visit it every day (sometimes in the morning and evening)! Provide easy access to the water and you will get to know your visitors one by one (and they will already be regular visitors when it comes time for winter feeding).

Your Dues are Due if your label reads

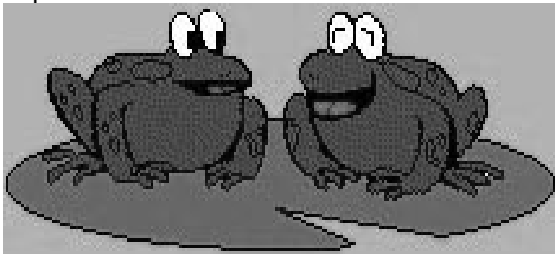
6-02, 7-02 or 8-02

**Please renew as soon as possible to
 continue receiving the newsletter.**

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

OFFICERS:

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Mary Bechtold | President |
| Topeka | 785-267-1611 |
| Joe Weir | Vice President |
| Topeka | 785-233-6711 |
| Diane Gruver | Secretary |
| Holton | 785-364-3046 |
| Tom Platis | Treasurer |
| Topeka | 785-478-9514 |



Check it out - www.tawgs.org

The Lily Pad

Published Monthly, February to November by the Topeka Area Water Garden Society (TAWGS), a non-profit organization. TAWGS does not warrant the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Topeka Area Water Garden Society.

The Lily Pad encourages submission of articles pertaining to water gardening from the membership and other interested parties. Deadline is the first of each month. Address input and/or questions to:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor
 408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436
 785 364-3046 (w) 785-233-4085
fdgruver@holtonks.net

We reserve the right to edit input to meet publishing requirements. Copy cannot be returned.