

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

Volume 5, Issue 9

October 1, 2002



Tour goes (l-r) Mike Bradley, Hi Stockwell, Georgia & Tom Sirridge, Mary Eberhardt, Stan and Mary Ann Bechtold, Mary Pat Fischer, Pat Rokey, David Puff, Jon Fischer and Duane Eberhardt visit around Pat and Dick Rokey's pond.

SE Member Only Pond tour held

We couldn't have asked for a more perfect day for the TAWGS third and final Member Only Pond Tour Sunday, September 15th. Temperatures in the seventies and no wind made it a gorgeous day for the twenty-one tour goers!

Our first stop was at the home of Pat and Dick Rokey, who were winners of this year's Topeka Beautification Shade Garden Category. It didn't take us long to see why. Huge trees provide lots of shade for the many varieties of hostas and other shade loving plants in their garden. The sun does shine in some of their back yard though which lays claim to both a swimming pool and a water garden. Pat attended the Master Gardener class this year and she can name each of the many varieties of plants in their landscape and tell you all about them.

The biggest hyacinths I have ever seen grow in the biofalls at the ponds of Tom and Georgia Sirridge. They have to be nearly 3 feet tall! Georgia said they don't bloom much but they sure looked happy! Their connected ponds are adorned with large beautiful graceful butterfly koi and the tall umbrella plant and cannas and in the pond are certainly not affected by the salt content in the water that they maintain to keep the fish healthy. A net lines one side of their pond to discourage the blue heron that would like to frequent

Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m., Wed., Oct. 16, 2002

Deb Spencer

Waters Edge

Hydraulics

their pond if he could just get in!

An antique grocery cart filled with flowers greets you at the home of Cecil and Eileen Schmidt, who have the tamest bullfrogs. Eileen said she hasn't been in the pond for a couple months because of the resident snake who made an appearance, although it wasn't invited. Too bad snakes aren't a deterrent for herons as Eileen has problems with one too. Schmidt's pretty much have wide-open spaces and lots of sun for their pond and huge vegetable/fruit garden. The neat raised beds give the garden a "Victory Garden" atmosphere.

The sloped backyard of Stan and Mary Ann Bechtold makes an ideal location for their long streambed that flows into the pond near their patio. Mexican heather borders the pond and the lotus looks good even though Mary Ann said it hasn't bloomed in the three years that she's had it. Roses and other perennials grace their many flowerbeds.

The final stop of the tour was at the new water garden area at Lake Shawnee where we enjoyed our potluck supper. Invited guests were Gerald Binkley, the mastermind of the water gardens and flowerbeds in the area, and Dave Bartels who is the project manager for Shawnee County. Uninvited guests were little biting black gnats that were real pests! Following our delicious meal, Gerald and Dave both explained more about the project that is still under construction. The large water garden and two streambeds, splitting around a pavilion, that flow down the hill into another water garden and then into the lake are complete, but several flowerbeds and the gazebo are still under construction. Donations of material and rocks have made the project come in under budget, but they still need money for the project. Dave said that they would be planting on Saturday, September 28 and October 4, 8 a.m. to noon, if anyone wants to help. Bring shovels and tools.

Many thanks to all of the pond owners who shared their ponds with our group and to Dan and Carol Neill who provided the tables for our meal. We were

happy to have them join us even though they dropped their membership this month because they dismantled their pond a few weeks ago. We look forward to the Member Only Pond Tours again next year. They are lots of fun and give us a chance to get better acquainted.



Three foot tall water hyacinths grow in the Sirridge's biofalls.

Presidents message

By Mary Bechtold

You are all marvelous folks. Our meeting last month provided us with some great leadership for next year's committees and as usual a complimentary group to work with them. Thank you. Check out the minutes if you are interested in the Lawn and Garden, Bylaws, or the Pond Tour committee for next year.

Puddles and Pads sent all current members a letter this month. It allows the club to conduct the pond tour, no strings attached and they have withdrawn their co-sponsor name but they plan to continue to support the club via their advertisements.

Please let them know you appreciate their confidence in us to continue a class act pond tour tradition. With these changes and the 501 (c) (3) status in progress the Bylaws are being reviewed. Address any changes to the committee ASAP.

Please note the group bus tour being planned to the Wichita Lawn and Garden Show in Feb. This first one will be paid by each member. We need more time to work out the details to see if the club can support sponsorships. They will carry 55 people; get your names in early.

Next month, we will vote on the slate of offices for 2003. Plan to come and support these folks. The nominating committee deserves a big thanks from us all.

November will be a potluck supper at Ward Mead to adjourn for this year and pass the leadership on.

Enjoy the fall season. You may sign up to work at the Apple Festival by calling Ward Mead.

Landscaping around the pond

By Diane Gruver

Cameron Rees, the plant guru of Skinners, gave a very interesting talk about landscaping around the pond at the September TAWGS meeting. Cameron said he grew up in the nursery business. He worked for his dad at Skinners while growing up and has a horticulture degree with emphasis on landscape design. After a few years of designing landscapes at Skinners, he is now in charge of the nursery. Cameron says he has had a few tub gardens but has never had a real water garden. He has also built a few water gardens but he says he doesn't consider himself an expert on ponds; his expertise is landscape design and plant material.

The critical step before you build a water feature in your yard is to examine it and decide what you want, Cameron said. Do you want a big pond, or a little pond? What kind of sound do you want? Do you want a small trickle or Niagara Falls? Can you see it from the patio or a window in your house? Or do you want it to be a destination point in your yard? Water is soothing, and birds, fish and wildlife enjoying it are all fun to watch.

Ponds are flat, and a pond in the middle of a flat yard will be hard to see from the house. Where is it going to look good? Where is it going to look natural?

Don't put a pond in a low point because everything runs into it, Cameron said. Preformed ponds float, and a pond liner will also float if water gets under it. You need good drainage with no possible run off of lawn fertilizer, insecticides or pesticides, which will kill your fish and plants. Cameron's advice was to look at magazines and study pictures. Look at other people's water gardens to get ideas.

"A backdrop for a waterfall or stream helps it look more natural," Cameron said. "Berms and tall plants give an illusion that an actual stream could flow from there. It makes it believable. It needs to be tall so you can't see through or behind it. Also, face the waterfall so you can see it when you're sitting on the patio."

Plant material will help soften the stonework around the pond so that it blends into the landscape. Let it creep over the stones, but not completely cover the waterfall. Willow-like plants and ferns look like they belong around ponds. Use stone in other parts of the landscape to make it blend in with the pond and look more natural. Fern leaf Buckthorn and Japanese maples are good plants to use around ponds. Weeping plants add accent.

"Pay attention to where you put your water garden," Cameron said. "A water garden is not something that you can pick up and move if you don't like where you put it the first time. If you want it to feel right, it's got to be right! Look at the rest of the landscape and blend it in. It needs to fit into the long term landscape plan."

On another note, Cameron said that the new

plant zone maps are placing Kansas closer to Zone 6, although he's a little leery about assuming that we won't ever have minus 20 degree winters again. Plant accordingly and don't be disappointed if you plant a Zone 6 plant and it dies. He joked that in Kansas we have five seasons: too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry and too windy.

Concerning pine wilt that is killing scotch pines in several states, Cameron explained that it is a fatal disease and nothing can be done to prevent it. Affected trees die quickly and need to be cut down and burned to prevent the beetles from spreading to other trees. He suggested planting white or Austrian pines, although it isn't known if eventually they might not be affected as well.

Minutes of September 18, 2002 Meeting

President Mary Ann Bechtold called the meeting to order and welcomed the members and several guests. Self-introductions were made and people told what geographical area they live in. Cameron Reece from Skinners Garden Center gave an interesting program on landscaping around the pond. The meeting re-convened after a short break for refreshments, which were provided by Mary Ann, Jeannine Miller, and Dean Demoss.

The minutes were approved as mailed in the Lily Pad. Tom Platis gave the treasurer's report saying that we had a total of \$7,456.57 in the treasurer, including \$5,316.58 in the checking account, \$2,096.65 in the money market fund, and \$43.34 in petty cash.

Joe Breitenstein gave the Garden Council report saying the outer windows in the church in Ward Meade should be in place by Apple Fest, which is October 6th. The Council donated \$1,000 toward them. The Council will sell bulbs at the Apple Festival and Joe asked that anyone that could help with that project to let him know. (266-6618 or e-mail jbreit@aol.com) They also need volunteers for Apple Festival. Diane commented that Ray Schroder said that the electrical problem will be repaired before Apple Fest and the crack across the bottom of the fountain will be repaired this winter after it is drained.

Dean Demoss said that he needs volunteers for help to clean the Fountain at 10:00 a.m. on October 5th so that it will be in good shape for the Apple Fest. He would also like to make sure that Anna's Pond looks okay. They will take the plants out of the fountain at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, October 14th and he will need volunteers to help that day as well. He will appreciate anyone that can help either day. You can call him at 272-1525, e-mail him at drdemoss2000@yahoo.com or just show up!

Floyd Gruver gave the nomination committee report. He said that they were able to find people willing to run for 3 of the 4 offices: Jim Green, treasurer; Diane Gruver, secretary; and Becky Coffman, vice president. He would appreciate nominations from the floor for president or someone to volunteer. David Puff nominated Tom Platis for President. Don Tallifero

moved that nominations cease. The motion was seconded and carried. The slate of officers will be voted on next month.

David Puff moved that we increase our \$1,000 donation to the Lake Shawnee project that was voted on last month to \$2,500. It was seconded and carried. Floyd Gruver commented that he would like to see the TAWGS name on a plaque near the water gardens instead of a flowerbed.

Earlene Jirik moved that we donate up to \$500 for an indoor water feature for the Ronald McDonald House. The motion was seconded and carried.

Earlene also reported that the Wichita Lawn and Garden Show will be March 5 – 9 and she has checked on the possibility of a bus tour for the club. The cost would be \$40 per person, which includes transportation and a ticket, but would not include meals. The bus holds 55 people. Earlene needs to know if we want to go on Saturday or Sunday so please call her at 266-5492 (if she's not home leave a message of your name and preference) or e-mail her at ijdej@kcisp.net and let her know which day you prefer if you are interested in going.

President Mary said that David Puff, Eric Wood and Diane Gruver have volunteered to be on the Bylaw Revision Committee. Tom Platis also volunteered to serve. David will be chairman.

The Pond Tour Committee is ready to move forward and Mike Bradley has offered to serve. Others that volunteered are: Bechtolds, Jeannine Miller, Becky Coffman, Fischers, Hodges, and Gruvers. Other volunteers are welcome! Floyd and Diane will co-chair again if nobody else wants to.

The Lawn and Garden Show committee is: Bob and Becky Coffman, Dale Jirik, Don Tallifero and Jim Green. A chairman has not been appointed.

David Puff said that he still has 12 lily rhizomes from the plant sale and they are available free to any member who has volunteered this year. Get in contact with David at 286-0448, 286-1780 or e-mail at drpuff@networksplus.net.

Audrey Bosley (267-0987, aabdob@bosleys.org) announced that she has koi and shubinkins that she needs a new home for. It was also announced that Peggy Foster has calico fish, 213-2658.

Mary Pat Fischer, Helen Platis and Donnis Hodges volunteered to bring refreshments for next month. Meeting adjourned.

Plants that can not freeze solid in the winter time.....

Information provided in October 1999 Reflections

Hardy Water Wisteria, Golden Buttons, Melon Sword, Houttynia 'Chameleon, New Zealand Jumping Rush, Azure Carpet, Cardinal Flower and the Lobelias, Water Clovers, Parrot Feather, Water Parsley, Pickerel Plant and Lizard Tail.

Arc-en-Ciel Lily explained

My friend, John Mirgon, the grandfather of water gardening, saw the recent article in the Lily Pad about the Arc-en-Ciel water lily at Coffman's and sent me the following information. John is from Denver, Colorado and started the very first water garden society, the Colorado Water Garden Society, in 1984. He was also instrumental in the formation of the International Water Garden Society and has helped numerous societies get started across the United States. John is an honorary member of several water garden societies. He wrote:

"A bit about the nyphaea 'Arc-en-Ciel'. This plant here in the states came about with Water Pagels in San Diego stopping by a yard sale where a fellow was selling aquatic plants. Walter collected this plant from this sale and started it growing for him there in San Diego. With this, he shared the plant with the Denver Botanic Gardens under the name of 'Japanese Spotted Lily'.

In 1986, the Colorado Water Garden Society held a mini seminar here at the Gardens prior to the "Water Lily Societies" International Symposium held in Saint Louis, Missouri. Present at this seminar was Philip Swindells from England, Charles Thomas and some of his staff from Lilypons Water Gardens. While viewing the lilies at the Gardens, we were all standing and yakking about the lilies and other aquatics on display. All of a sudden Philip Swindells asked, "Where did you get that lily?" He was pointing to the Arc-en-Ciel. Joseph Tomocik, gardener at the Gardens, rather held back a bit. Philip said, "No! I want to know where you got that lily." So we told him.

He then informed us what nympheaea it really was and why he wanted to know so strongly about it. The plant had disappeared from England and Europe as well, as far as was known. The plant hadn't been known of or heard of for over 22 years. So it was thought to have totally disappeared from being. Here he was seeing it in the Gardens in Denver!

The foliage being mottled as it is, was of great interest to the Japanese gardeners, as they appreciate variegated foliage plants. There they had been growing it and somehow the fellow in San Diego had apparently received it from there. Once more it is back in circulation and many ornamental garden pools are home to this once, thought, lost plant."

Arc-en-Ciel

French for 'Rainbow in the Sky'

In 1901, Marliac produced this rather interesting water lily, which is better known for its foliage than for its blossom. Leaves are green blotched with bronze, white, rose and purple and it has been grown for this feature alone. Flowers are sweetly scented, pale salmon pink in color, shading to white. Sepals are rose splashed. The plant is quite delicate and a medium grower. (This is given in the book, *Encyclopedia of the Water Lily* by Charles O. Masters.)

Winterizing your pond

Reprinted from the October 2000 Water Garden News
FISH

The water temperature is dropping now and we should be feeding your fish less as their metabolism slows down. Hopefully you have been feeding your fish well with a high protein food this summer to allow them to build up a reserve of fat to help them through the winter. After the water temperature drops to the sixties you should decrease the amount of food given and feed only once a day. Provide food with a protein content of 25 to 32 percent. A wheat germ based food is good at this time as it is easily digested. As the water temperatures continue to drop to below 60 degrees you should feed only two or three times a week. It can take your fish two or three days to digest food at this temperature. Once the temperature drops below 50 degrees you should stop feeding altogether until spring when the water temperature remains above 50.

You should strive to keep a lot of leaves and other organic debris out of the pond especially in the winter. As these materials decompose they can produce toxic gases that could be trapped in the pond if it is covered by ice for more than a few days. It is important to keep at least a small area free of ice so that these gases can escape. Do not break the ice as the shock waves created can damage or kill your fish. One of the easiest ways to do this is with a floating pond de-icer. This device floats in the pond and has a built in thermostat to turn the heating element on when the water temperature drops below 40 degrees. They can also be used to keep a small pond from freezing solid allowing you to keep your fish alive.

With their slower metabolism and the absence of plants our fish are more susceptible to predation by raccoons, birds and other animals. If you have added leaf netting to keep the leaves out of your pond this should protect your fish as well. A Koi Kastle will help your fish be more comfortable by providing a place for them to hide. One of the most effective methods of keeping predators away from the pond at any time of the year is the ScareCrow. This device senses movement with a motion detector and sprays any intruder with a burst of water frightening them off.

PLANTS

You should have stopped feeding your plants by now. As the foliage on your hardy plants begins to die back you should remove any dead and dying leaves and place the plant deep enough in the pond to keep the roots from freezing. While it is true that some marginal plants will survive even if their roots freeze solid it is best to lower all of your plants below the ice zone.

If your pond is too small or shallow to offer protection from freezing temperatures then you still have other options. You can add a floating deicer, which will keep the pond above freezing. If your pond is not too large and does not contain any fish you can place a cover such as plywood over the pond and cover this with bags of leaves or bales of straw to provide insulation. A

tarp should also be placed over the straw to keep it dry to provide better insulation. A basement can provide protection if you remove the plants and store them either in their original containers or in peat moss. A method that I like is to build a temporary shelter over the pond. Lumber or PVC pipe can be used to construct a framework over the pond. Place clear plastic over this and weight the plastic down with soil or stone. This frame should hold the plastic a few feet above the water. Greenhouse type plastic is best but construction grade plastic should last the winter. This method works very well and is basically like moving the pond to one USDA hardiness zone higher. On clear days the sun warms the water and even if covered with snow there is good insulation over the pond. Some tropicals can be wintered over this way in mild winters even if you live in zone 6 or 7.

Some plants do not like being submerged in the pond through the winter. Iris ensata formerly known as Iris kaempferi a Japanese Iris should be removed from the pond and planted in the yard until spring when new growth starts and it can be placed back in the pond for the summer. Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower) should be removed from the pond and planted in the yard for the winter. This plant should have a few inches of mulch over it as well. You will have more success wintering over Cannas if you remove the rhizomes from the pot and store in slightly damp peat in a basement or other cool area. Some tropical water lilies will bloom all winter if kept in a tub container inside and given at least six hours of bright light. You can also winter them over by removing the tuber from the pot after the foliage has died back from a freeze. Place the tuber in a container of slightly damp sand or peat moss at 50 degrees. In the spring you will need to heat the tuber in an aquarium to about 75 degrees to trigger its growth before moving outside.

One choice with tropical plants is simply to dispose of them after freezing weather and replace them in the spring. This way you get to try new plants and colors next season. If you want to try wintering over your tropical plants there are a few methods worth trying.

Many tropical plants can be brought inside and treated as a houseplant for the winter. Umbrella Palm, Taros, and Calla Lilies will do very well with medium light levels. If these are in no-hole containers then no special care is needed otherwise keeping the pots in a tray full of water is needed to keep the plants wet. Water hyacinths and water lettuce require more care than they are worth; it is much easier and less expensive to replace them each spring. If you still want to make the effort they require 10 hours of intense light and temperatures above 70 degrees.

PUMPS AND FILTERS

Depending on your climate and other factors you may or may not want to run your pump and filter system through the winter. If you live in a climate with temperatures mostly well above freezing then it will be to your advantage to keep your pump and filter running through the winter. The bacteria in your biological filter

will not be active at low temperatures but it will remain alive as long as you keep it supplied with oxygen-laden water. When spring arrives and the water temperature is rising the bacteria can start to work immediately keeping the water quality good for your fish and helping to control the algae. Should you choose to run your filter through the winter it is a good idea to minimize the water circulation in order to take advantage of the layering effect of the water. (Water temperature is densest at 39 degrees and the water on the bottom of the pond will remain at this temperature even with freezing temperatures on the surface.) Some ways to minimize circulation is to turn off bottom drains if possible, place intakes to pumps/filters at mid water, turn off surface skimmers, (you do not want to circulate top or bottom water in the winter), place your intakes closer to the outlets in the pond (waterfall or fountain), and or turn the pump down. These actions will allow the biological filters to stay alive without interfering with the layering of the water. Massive circulation of water in the winter can super chill the water by exposing warmer pond water to below freezing temperatures leading to the death of the fish. One problem with running a pump and filter in the winter is the potential of major damage to your filter and plumbing system if the power goes off for extended periods and you are not at home to make sure that no water is present in the filter and plumbing. If water is allowed to freeze in plumbing, UV's and filters this can lead to breakage requiring replacement of these units. If your system is designed to allow the water to flow back into the pond in the event of a power outage then these problems can be averted. If you have a check valve installed in your system you can use a long piece of small tubing or wire to hold the valve open to allow the water to drain out.

You can turn off the pumps and filters for the winter. Cold water holds much more oxygen than warm water and the fish's respiration is slow therefore you should not need the circulation and aeration. The bacteria in your biological filter does not work in cold temperatures so the only reason to run the filter is to keep the bacteria alive. If you turn off the pump and filter for the winter be sure to drain all plumbing. External filters, UV's, and external pumps will need to be drained. Submersible pumps should be left in the pond or in a bucket of water in a warm place to keep the seals from drying out. If you choose this method be sure to clean the filter before starting up in the spring. With the absence of biological filtration you may want to add Microbe-Lift's new Autumn Prep which contains bacteria that will work in near freezing temperatures and it also contains enzymes that consume cellulose in the form of leaves.

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-oo.cood. Thanks!

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society
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2002 Calendar of Events

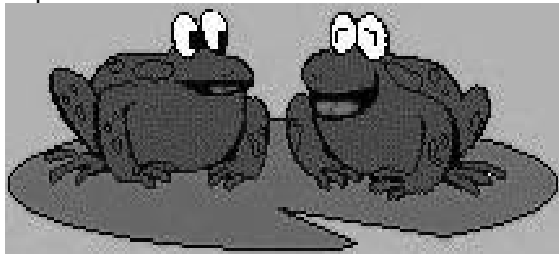
Oct. 6	Apple Fest
Oct. 16	TAWGS Monthly Meeting- Election of Officers
Nov. 20	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
2003	
Feb. 14-16	Topeka Lawn and Garden Show
Feb. 14-16	Kansas City Metropolitan L&G Show, American Royal
Mar. 1 – 2	Johnson Co. Show, Kansas City
5 – 9	Wichita Lawn and Garden Show
20-23	Kansas City Home Show, Bartle Hall
June 21-22	Topeka 12 th Annual Pond Tour
July 12-13	Kansas City Pond Tour

**It's a good idea to change 1/3 of the
water in your pond in the fall. Be sure to
add declorinator.**

Your Dues are Due if your label reads
8-02, 9-02 or 10-02
Please renew as soon as possible to
continue receiving the newsletter.

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

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Check it out - www.tawgs.org

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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:

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