

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

Volume 5, Issue 8

September 1, 2002



TAWGS members admire the lilies in Debbie Dunkin's pond.

NE Pond tour enjoyed by all

By Diane Gruver

I've always thought that pond tours attracted heat (or cold) but the NE Members Only Pond Tour on Sunday, August 11th proved differently. Although a hot day had been forecast, the sun was elusive and about 35 of us enjoyed a beautiful day touring the 10 ponds offered on the tour.

The starting point for the tour was at Joe and Rita Sutcliff's and Joe had warned us previously that we might not be able to see his pond since he'd had a recent pond disaster. I don't know how bad the pond looked before he worked so hard to put it back together, but I do know that it looked great the day of the tour. Walking in on a shaded driveway, tour goers were greeted with various metal forms of yard art that Joe has created with his welder. An impressive waterfall plunges out of a natural cliff in Joe's yard and falls into a pool that is just a step out of his front door. Moss covered rocks stick out of the water and shy fish huddle in the middle of the pond. To enter the house you cross a wooden walk that bridges over connected ponds, containing taro and water lilies, on each side of the door. The secluded wooded area is neat setting, to say the least and we especially want to thank Joe for working so hard to get his pond back in shape for the tour.

The next stop was at Joe and Judy Cunningham's west of Valley Falls. They have two lily-laden ponds connected by a long streambed/almost

Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m., Wed., Sept. 18, 2002

Ward Meade Park

Cameron Rees, Skinners

Landscape Design/Plants

waterfall. A path going over a bridge leads to a raised platform where you can view Joe's large beautiful koi. Crustacean rocks gathered from near Perry Lake dot the landscape and Judy's painted rocks add interest in every nook and cranny. She even has a family of skunks (painted rocks.) Although not blooming, Judy has a huge collection of iris that must be gorgeous in season. It's worth the drive!

Frog flags, frog yard art and frog sounds greeted everyone at our house (Gruver's) in Holton, although Big Bud and Little Henry didn't make a showing. The lilies outdid themselves that day and even the Charlene Strawn yellow lily in a container on the deck stood tall and proud for tour goers to see. Although Floyd's new red flare tropical night blooming lily was closed, the huge red pads still were still quite impressive. (You should see us out there with our flashlight to admire it at night.) Constant watering has kept our landscape and zoyzia grass lush and green, much to everyone's surprise. Did anyone happen to notice that Floyd's Kansas flag was upside down? We would like to say that it was a contest and the ones that noticed it won a frog, but it was unintentional and we didn't notice it until later. Oops!

Returning to Topeka, the next stop was at the home of Del and Betty Lane, although they were absent because of out-of-town company. Their above ground pond offers a great view of the plants and the variegated pink/cream/green pads of a water lily which caught my interest again this year. (It might be Arc en Ciel?) A water wheel circulates the water at one end of the pond.

Dale and Maggie Warren's large pond is graced with lots of lilies, beautiful huge koi and a bronze fisherman sitting along the edge. There's a long streambed into another pond in the woods as well as a pond near their patio. A bigger-than-life-sized bronze buck is poised in a wooded area that is graced with paths and many shade living plants including a couple of stag horn ferns, something that I've recently become interested in since I purchased one at the Missouri

Botanical gardens in St. Louis this summer. A purple flowered plant caught my eye which Maggie said is from the oregano family and it was Blade something? Maybe Blade Red? Does anyone remember what the marker said? It was very striking and said to be drought tolerant.

Lois and Keith Pelton have two ponds connected by a cascading streambed alongside their multi-level deck. Their wooded yard was lush and beautiful real-live longhaired cats dotted the landscape. This stop was made even more enjoyable with an ice cream bar treat, which really hit the spot! Thanks Peltons!

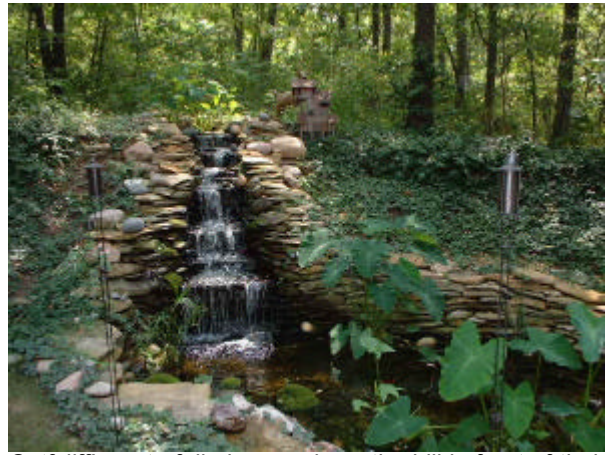
The number of ponds at Eric and Trina Wood's seem to grow with each visit as Eric had just completed a huge waterfall feature and pond, which runs into the big pond below. There's also another pond near the house which flows into the big pond. Two humungous tropical day blooming lilies, a white and a pink, in the big pond were just beautiful. (Love those tropicals. Floyd says that's all we're going to have next year. We'll see about that when he finds out that you have to buy them every year or rig up a large warm indoor pond to over winter them. We're already running out of space in the dining room with our critter box for the frogs, 50 gallon container for the cannas and baby fish and 10 gallon aquarium where Bubble Butt and his little brother, for company of course, now permanently reside.)

A snake lives in Debbie Dunkin's pond so she has lilies, lilies everywhere since she hasn't been in the pond to remove any leaves. "I'm not going in there!" Debbie said. She said that the sweet potato plant near the pond was going nuts, but the one that she planted to hide the bio-filter was refusing to provide the much-desired cover that she had hoped for. A volunteer watermelon plant was thriving along the stepping stone path to the pond and a passionflower vine was throwing off unusual pods and one pretty bloom. Cookies were good too!

The pond at Gerald and Donnis Hodges sits below a huge waterfall made with almost boulder type rocks and their lotus was getting ready for it's SEVENTH bloom! (How do people do it?) Their pennywort and parrot feather were the healthiest I've ever seen, not to mention their huge water hyacinths with beautiful lilac blooms. Things are sure happy in their pond!

The last stop was a potluck at David and Ruth Puff's where they have two above ground ponds connected by a waterfall. A log cabin houses their bio-filter and adds to the scenic beauty of their landscape. We circled their gravel driveway with lawn chairs and enjoyed the good food and fellowship provided by our fellow TAWGS members.

It was a good day! Thanks to everyone that shared their ponds! Hope to see you on the SE Member Only Pond Tour on September 15th.



Sutcliffe's waterfall plunges down the hill in front of their house.

A letter from David Puff

Dear Members,

The tour on Sunday covered quite a bit of territory and when we were all done it was nice to sit down and share a covered dish potluck with all of the members who got to go on the NE Region Tour. Doug Peterman, Past President, kicked things off with a prayer before the potluck and asked the good Lord to bless us with a little rain and a few other things of interest to our group. I'm not sure how much rain we got in Topeka, but Ruth Ann, the grandkids and I took a few days off and went to Silver Dollar City and it rained just the right amount.

It was a good day for the tour. The temperature was pretty nice compared to the temperatures we have had in the past three weeks and the food was great. The Members Only Pond Tours are probably one of the better projects TAWGS has to offer. It seems to be well worth the time looking at all of the different ways you can tie a water garden into your existing landscape. I know water lilies need a lot of sun, but when you have a lot of shade bordering the water garden it opens the door to many possibilities and creative ideas. The variety of slopes, existing landscapes, type of stone used and mixtures of plants chosen by the homeowners are always different from one location to the next. The one factor that always remains the same is the amount of work put into taking care of the water garden and getting it ready for a tour. I would like to thank all of the homeowners for sharing their paradise with the rest of us on the member's only tours. And for the hard work involved in presenting their paradise with other members.

I think one of the things I personally enjoy most is when we have looked at all of the hard work, creativity and possibilities that other members have used with their existing landscapes, the ideas, visions and plans for the future the rest of us can use as a educational tool to improve our paradise. And when the tour is over all of the members get together and enjoy a potluck dinner. Thank you to all of the members hosting the NE TAWGS Region Tour and thanks to all of the members who let the NE Region share our water gardens with you.

From the President

By Mary Ann Bechtold

Hopefully the Dog Days of Summer will soon be behind us. Some of the projects we dreamed about as we looked out on the snow last winter materialized. Others left lots to be desired.

I hope those of you who have visited member's pond these past few months have gotten new ideas and better acquainted with those you see at the meetings. Thanks to all of you who have opened your yards to us and shared your experiences.

The nomination committee is working on a slate of officers for next year. I know many of you can provide the leadership and have wonderful ideas. Please don't wait to be called. Step up. Helen Platis, Dean DeMoss and Floyd Gruver would like to talk with you.

The last Members Only Pond Tour for this year will start at 3 PM on Sept 15th at Rokey's and end at Lake Shawnee around 6 PM. Please make an effort to come to the Pot Luck Supper at Lake Shawnee. We have invited the 6 workers and their guests to join us. They have worked hard to provide us with a horticultural and water feature that we can be proud to share with visitors. We want to say thanks and have them enjoy the fruits of their labor with us.

August 21, 2002 TAWGS Minutes

President Mary Ann Bechtold called the August meeting of the Topeka Area Water Garden Society to order at 7:00 p.m. with self-introductions. We had 3 guests. One of the guests paid his dues and we welcome Dan Clark to TAWGS. The speaker, Jeff Yeckel from River City Koi in Kansas City did not show up so we immediately began the business meeting.

The July minutes were approved as printed in the August Lily Pad. Treasurer Tom Platis reported that we have a total of \$7,425.83, including the checking account, money market and petty cash.

Under committee reports, Webmaster Jim Haugh said that the transfer of the website to Phoenix Engineering had gone smoothly. He hopes to have the new format posted by next week.

Mary Ann reported on the Garden Council meeting in the absence of Joe Breitenstein. She thanked the volunteers that brought refreshments for the August meeting which TAWGS hosted and said they did the club proud.

Dean Demoss reported that the water is low in the fountain and that it apparently has a leak. Also, an extension cord is being used for the electrical supply, which poses a risk to people working in the water. He said that anyone who gets in the water should unplug the cord first. It was also mentioned that the park is now only open during regular hours so don't expect to clean the fountain at 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning.

Under old business, Arlene Webb said that she is accepting pictures from people for the scrapbook.

Mary urged volunteers to turn their hours in to Mary Pat Fischer.

Becky Coffman said that she checked with Stormont Vail and they said they were not interested in TAWGS building a water garden on their site. There weren't any reports on Lake Shawnee or Ronald McDonald House.

Earlene Jirik said that she is working on a bus tour to the Lawn and Garden Show in Wichita next spring and hoped to have some cost figures next month. She asked if there were any other places that the group would want to visit; there were no suggestions. A comment was made that the botanical garden would probably a little too cool to visit at that time of the year.

Mary passed out maps for the September 15th SE Member Pond Tour. It will start at Pat and Dick Rokey's at 3:00 p.m. Dan Neill said that he and Carol are dismantling their pond this weekend (to put in a pool ☺) and anyone that would like plants, fish, etc., are welcome to anything. Therefore, they will not be on the tour as planned. The tour will end at Lake Shawnee and we will invite some Lake Shawnee employees that worked on the new pond to attend the picnic as our guests.

Joe Weir announced that the Central Member Pond Tour that had been scheduled in October has been canceled for lack of ponds and the fact that it might be too late in the season. They will be the first pond tour hosts next year. Earlene Jirik suggested that next year the tours be scheduled the Sunday after the regular TAWGS meeting so that people would be reminded about the tour. The dates were selected by the different demographic groups this year to fit the pond hosts schedules.

Since TAWGS is still in the pre-approved 501 3 (c) status stage, President Mary Ann read the requirements to achieve the tax free status. She said this is the reason that we need to record volunteer hours and make sure that we are meeting the criteria. There are some who are questioning the legality for TAWGS to co-sponsor the Topeka Pond Tour with Puddles-N-Pads. Trina Wood explained again the history of the pond tour and that P&P owns the tour. Three years ago, before the 9th pond tour, P&P offered to give the tour to TAWGS for a fund raiser, with P&P as the co-sponsor. They receive no funds from the proceeds of the tour and donate \$750 to be used for advertising. After much discussion, Dan Neill said that he would take the contract that we sign with P&P each year to a tax lawyer for a written opinion on the 501 3 (c) laws.

Under New Business Mary asked for volunteers for the nomination committee. Floyd Gruver, Helen Platis and Dean Demoss volunteered. They will present a slate of officers at the September meeting.

There was no interest for more TAWGS t-shirts.

Mike Bradley moved that we donate the

minimum amount needed to get our name on a plaque to the pond project at Lake Shawnee (probably \$1,000) and present the check at the potluck supper in September. Joe W. seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Since we don't know how the tax ruling might affect us, Mike offered an amendment to the motion stating that the executive committee can withdraw the donation if the tax lawyer determines that we will have to pay income taxes on the three previous pond tours. Trina seconded the motion and it carried. The original motion also carried.

Diane announced that we have several copies of a CD taken of the pond tour by Karen Sage and that they are available to members. Let Diane know if you would like to have one. Thanks to Dean Demoss, Joe Sutcliff, Becky Coffman and Markay Peterman for burning the CD's.

Dale Jirik thanked Puddles-N-Pads for all they've done for TAWGS and wanted it noted in the minutes that Puddles-N-Pads have been very gracious and generous and have provided speakers for our meetings, donated the use of their equipment and have discounted materials for TAWGS projects. He did not want to see anything done that would jeopardize the relationship.

President Mary Ann thanked members for their frank remarks and for respecting other's opinions as we move towards being sure that we are in compliance with the 501 3 (c) requirements. She also thanked Dan and Carol Neill and Stan and Susan Wilch for the refreshments this month. Janette Miller and Mary Ann will bring refreshments next month.

Meeting adjourned.

Things to do in the pond before fall

Reprinted from 8-24-01 Splash

Summer is nearing its end in some parts of the country, and at this time there are a few things that should be done to make sure the pond goes into winter in good shape:

- Check your fish for injuries, parasites and other problems. Generally, all these things are easier to treat while the water is fairly warm. The best time to give your fish a good "examination" is while they are eating.
- Use a skimmer or fish net to get most of the organic debris out of the bottom of the pond. Things like decomposing leaves can really be harmful to the fish once the weather gets cold, because the process of decomposition uses up valuable oxygen in addition to changing the water chemistry.
- Make sure all equipment needed to over-winter the pond (such as nets to cover it to keep leaves out and predators from stealing your fish and a de-icer to keep an ice free hole) is available and in good condition and working order.
- Check for new arrivals (babies) and be sure the pond is not over-populated. If necessary give some fish to neighbors with ponds or see if a pet or pond store will take the extra ones. The pond

is likely to suffer from lack of oxygen at some point during the winter and an over-abundance of fish just compounds the problem.

Time to thin them out

Reprinted from 9-05-01 Splash

Many ponds have nice, thick growth of oxygenators, Parrots Feather, etc. by now. Some of that needs to be thinned out as the days and nights start getting cooler because it will partially die down and the decomposing organic matter will put too much of a load on the bacterial culture in the pond as the bacteria start to go dormant when the temperatures fall.

When it is time to thin out (not eliminate!) depends on the part of the country where the pond is located and how deep the pond is. Warmer layers of water in the bottom of the pond will support these plants longer than the colder layers near the top. As the temperatures start to get lower and the days get shorter these minor chores can be done a little at a time.

Don't forget to use a sturdy net to fish out leaves that have blown into the pond and soon it will be time to cover it completely with a net to prevent too many leaves falling into it.

The importance of fertilizing and manicuring plants

by Erik Tate

Reprinted from August 2002 Water Garden News

We often get inquiries about why a water lily is not blooming well. There can be many possibilities as to the cause of the problem. Some water lily hybrids just bloom better than others. But if your water lilies are not blooming as well as you would like, the problem is most likely one of three things.

1. They are not getting enough sunlight (five or six hours of sunlight is required for most water lilies.)
2. The under-performing plant is pot bound and needs to be repotted.
3. There is a lack of sufficient fertilizer for the plant to produce flowers.

Water lilies are heavy feeders that require regular feeding to bloom well (especially if potted in a small pot). Has your water lily been growing for two or three years in a five gallon or smaller pot? If so, you need to divide and repot the plant before you can expect good flower production.

Water lilies can be divided at anytime during the active growing season. After being divided, it will only take two or three weeks for your hardy water lily to begin active growth again.

Since hardy water lilies spend more than one year in a pot, a large diameter pot will yield the best results. Water lilies do not need more than six or seven inches of soil depth, since the roots are shallow and new growth is along the surface. A pot that is 14 to 16 inches in diameter will provide room for about three years of

growth.

Hardy water lilies should be fed monthly during the growing season to help the plant produce a lot of flowers. You will also find that the flowers are larger on plants that are well fertilized.

Tropical water lilies can be fed as often as twice a month and utilize the fertilizer to reward you with more and larger flowers than less fertilized plants. Tropical water lilies are such fast growers that it is difficult to over feed them. We find it is not necessary for tropical water lilies to be in a large container if they are kept well fertilized.

It is important to use the proper analysis of fertilizer for your aquatics.

It is OK to use a fertilizer high in nitrogen (the first number in the analysis) when feeding a shallow water plant that is grown for foliage and not for its flowers.

However, when fertilizing water lilies and other plants that we grow primarily for flowers, it is important not to use too much nitrogen. You should select a fertilizer that has more phosphorus (the middle number) than nitrogen.

The third number represents potash content of the fertilizer.

Fertilizer should also have some means of slowly feeding your plants for long periods to keep from burning the plants by applying too much fertilizer at one time. Slow release fertilizer also saves you from having to feed the plants too often.

We sell Pondtabbs, which are slow release tablets that feed for several weeks. Each tablet will slowly release fertilizer to the plant instead of being released into the water, which would contribute to algae growth. They are easily applied by simply pushing one or more tablets into the pot.

Fertilizing your plants should begin as soon as you see new growth in the spring and end about a month before a killing frost.

As water lilies grow, older leaves turn yellow and begin to decompose. These dead and dying leaves as well as spent flowers should be removed from the plant. Otherwise they will feed the algae and pollute the water once they fall from the plant. You should remove them simply by clipping the dying part off as close to the pot as possible. For harder to reach plants, you can get into the pond or use a long handle plant trimmer.

Time to fatten up your fish

Reprinted from 9-05-01 Splash

Where did the summer go? Here we are, ready to go into September already! Most of us will be seeing a decline of temperatures soon, so it is time to get the fish in the pond ready for their dormancy.

The fish should be fed a good and plentiful diet right now, because they need to accumulate body fat to live off during the winter and the pond should have a good bacterial culture by now that can easily handle any increased "output" from a little heavier feeding. Do keep an eye on nitrite levels as usual.

Fountain Maintenance List

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

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

Many thanks to all of you!!

Keep "stuff" out of pump

Reprinted from 8-04-02 Splash

One often heard lament from pond owners is that the pump keeps getting plugged up with "stuff" from the bottom of the pond!

Here is an easy way to help alleviate that problem:

- Put the pump in an aquatic planting basket
- Surround the pump with large gravel (has to be large enough not to get sucked into the pump, so the pump does not get damaged).

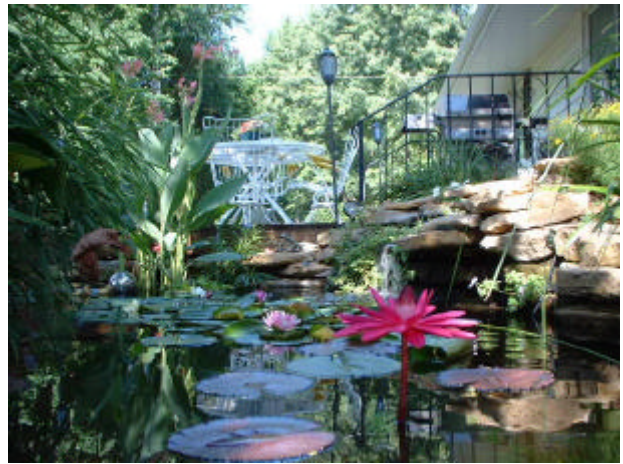
This will keep larger debris out of the pump and reduce the number of times it has to be cleaned!

Programs for 2002

Sept. 18 - Cameron Rees – Landscape Design/Plants

Oct. 16 - Deb Spencer, Water's Edge, Hydraulics

Nov. 20 - Pot Luck Supper & Social



Floyd's Red Flare night blooming tropical lily was not blooming for the NE Member Only Pond tour but here's how beautiful it is early morning.

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

Sept. 15 SE Members Only Pond Tour
Sept. 18 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 6 Apple Fest
Oct. 16 TAWGS Monthly Meeting-
Election of Officers
Nov. 20 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
2003
June 21-22 Topeka 12th Annual Pond Tour

Helpful Hint

Water is most dense at 39 degrees Fahrenheit and during the winter the bottom layer of the pond should be at or close to this temperature.

Therefore, if you plan to run your pump and filter this winter draw from mid-water rather than deep water so you will not disturb the lowest level (warmest) water.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads
7-02, 8-02 or 9-02
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.