

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

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March 1, 2003



Lawn & garden booth successful

by Becky Coffman

It sounds like the show was a success. I would like to thank all of the volunteers again since if it weren't for you we would not have had a booth. From what I heard everybody liked the booth this year and I want to thank the people who helped me put it together, especially the men. I would like to give them a big hand at putting the ponds together without knowing how it went. We need to thank Skinner's for the evergreen (which is now in my front yard) and Blackburn's for letting us use the two chairs. We had a lot of people stop by to talk and the kids loved to put their fingers in the water. I heard that some people wanted to buy our little critter's, to bad that we couldn't but I wouldn't part with them nor Dean Demoss or Betty Karnes (thanks for the use of them).

If any body has any new ideas for next year's booth let me know. Next year's theme is "Old World Gardens" so be thinking about what we can do for that. Thanks again for all the help.

From the President

by Tom Platis

At the February meeting on the 19th it was reported that the program for March would be about patio bricks and walls. However, Becky Coffman, Mary Bechtold and Diane Gruver decided, and I thought rightfully so, that we should have someone talk about the subject of opening their ponds for the summer. I know that us old members have heard this before, but we have some new members who would love to hear it

Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m. Wed., February 19, 2003

Ward Meade Park

Opening your Pond

for the first time. Besides, if you are like me, hearing it again won't hurt and you might pick up on something new. Or you just might refresh your memory. So bring it on!

On another matter, we need to think about our summer project. Jim's Green's idea to build a water garden for the VA Hospital sounds good. The VA people sound very excited about the idea. We need to think about this project next meeting.

Also, I would like to hear from members about the possibilities of having a night tour to show off the lighting effect on our water gardens. Is this possible? Anyway, think about it.

Until then, see you March 19th!

Minutes TAWGS February 19, 2003 Meeting

President Tom Platis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. We opened with self-introductions. We had two guests, Stacy and Barbara Smith. Jon Fischer moved and Mary Pat Fischer seconded to accept the minutes as printed in the December newsletter. Motion carried.

Tom read the treasurer's report in the absence of treasurer Jim Green. He said that Joe Breitenstein has agreed to audit the books one more time and he and Jim will try to have it completed in March. We have \$2,634.83 in checking, \$43.34 in petty cash and \$2,104.56 in a money market for a total of \$4,782.72.

V.P. Becky Coffman said that the program for next month would be about patio bricks and walls and how to build a patio around your pond. The speaker is from Topeka Concrete and will bring samples.

Secretary/newsletter editor Diane Gruver asked if people signed up to receive the newsletter by e-mail had received the February newsletter. Some had and some hadn't so she said she would send it again and would appreciate knowing if people like to receive it as an attachment or in PDF form on the web site. She asked for contributions to the newsletter from members and said it usually goes out about the first of the month.

Lawn and Garden booth chairman Becky Coffman gave a report on the Lawn and Garden show which was held Feb. 14-16. She thanked everyone who helped with the booth, including Puddles & Pads for plants used in the booth, Skinners for a tree, and a gliding chair from Blackburns. We used our new preformed ponds in the booth and it really looked nice. Members gave Becky and Bob a round of applause for their hard work on the booth.

Pond tour co-chairman Diane said that the dates for the pond tour June 21-22 have been sent to several national magazines to be included in their calendar of events and the local greenhouses and nurseries have been contacted for ads for the ticket/map. She said the first meeting will be held soon to get plans underway.

Mary Pat said that she and Jim Green have talked about the plaque at Lake Shawnee but haven't decided for sure what they want it to say yet. They will have something to present in March.

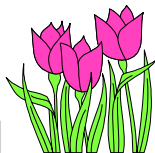
Becky reported that the fountain will be set in the Ronald McDonald House soon. Trina said that she will call Becky when it comes in and that although we have already paid for the fountain we still need to pay tax of about \$26.00.

Mary Pat Fischer reported that TAWGS members have donated over 900 hours to club projects this year. Reported hours are: Lawn and Garden show – 99 hours; Pond Tour – 247 hours; web site – 15 + hours, newsletter – 50 + hours; Garden Council meetings – 20 hours; Ronald McDonald Fountain Project – 50 + hours; Lily repotting party at Ward Meade – 59 hours; Flower/plant sale – 50 hours; Ward Meade fountain maintenance – 16 hours; Apple Fest – 50 + hours; Unknown hours spent on Lake Shawnee pond project and Midland hospice pond project. Members are to be congratulated for their willingness to volunteer their time.

Plants and plant stakes that were used in the lawn and garden show last weekend were given as door prizes to: Duane and Mary Eberhart, Bill and Sheila Thomas, Marikay Peterman, Stacy Smith and Mary Pat Fischer.

Peterman's and Fischer's volunteered to bring refreshments next month.

Following adjournment, refreshments provided by the officers were enjoyed as members had a chance to visit and get better acquainted.



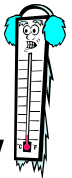
Bring on Spring

by Diane Gruver

My tulips are (or were before the snow) coming up and some snowdrops were blooming beside the pond on the south side of the house. Spring is coming! ☺ I'm ready for warm days, green grass and trees, blooming flowers and lots of sunshine.

Winter is not my favorite time of the year, to say the least.

I don't have good news to report about Bubble Butt and peas for swim bladder. Don't know if it was the peas or his time, but when Floyd went to feed him his two frozen peas one evening he was, let's say, unresponsive. Since he always floated it was hard to tell until Floyd got him in his hand and put the pea in front of his little mouth. It didn't move – a sure sign that something was wrong. Before, his little lips, or whatever fish have, would start sucking-like and he'd gobble up a half pea at a time. It was fun watching Floyd cradle him in his hand and feed the little fella. After a few moments of silence Floyd buried BB in the garden. When I asked him later what he was going to do for entertainment each evening now that BB was gone his comment was, "Well, the only thing I'm worried about is having to eat the rest of the bag of those @#*peas!" Now, wasn't that a nice thing to say after losing your little buddy? Needless to say, I haven't fed Floyd any of those peas yet. ☺



The spring thaw

by Erik Tate, Operations Manager

Reprinted from Jan/Feb. 2003 Water Gardening News

This time of year can be a time of extremes. For many of us it can be below freezing one week and in the 70's the next. Yet, we know that warm weather is fast approaching and our ponds will soon be waking up from their winter dormancy. As always, water temperature (not the calendar) is your guide to pond maintenance.

One of the first things that you will notice as the water temperatures increase is that your fish are slowly becoming more active. Your first inclination may be to feed them. I recommend waiting until your weather is somewhat stable and you are not expecting prolonged periods of below freezing temperatures. Wait until the water temperatures are stable at 50 degrees or above before beginning low protein fish food for koi. Goldfish can be fed at slightly cooler temperatures.

Another early change that you will see in your pond is algae growth. Your pond water may be turning green or you are noticing bits of string algae in clear water. Even in an otherwise well balanced pond algae growth in the late winter and early spring is normal.

Algae will start to grow with the increase in temperatures and available sunlight. Normally with the correct number and types of plants and with a properly sized biological filter operating, algae growth can be kept under control. We can't expect our biological filter and plants to be much help in combating the algae at this time of year because algae will grow at much cooler temperatures than the filter and plants will function in.

Many of the algae types that we see in our pond will grow well in water temperatures in the 40 degree

range whereas the bacteria that work in our filters need temperatures above 50 to begin their life processes.

What can we do you may ask to limit the algae growth while we wait for warmer temperatures?

If we remove the nutrients and the light then the algae will die. We can't expect to totally remove the nutrients and light but we can reduce it dramatically. To begin with, remove any dead or decaying organic matter from the pond. Use a pond net to remove leaves and other debris from the pond. An algae net is fine and can be scooped through the water to remove filamentous type algae. You can also use a pond vacuum to remove excess debris.

Remember to also check any external filters and to make sure the bottom is free of sludge build-up.

Ensure that rain runoff cannot flow into your pond. This can carry a lot of nutrients from your lawn into the pond and cause increased algae growth. Microbe-Lift PL and Microbe-Lift Spring/Summer Cleaner contain bacteria that work in temperatures below 50. These products will help break down the organic waste and reduce the nutrients feeding the algae in the pond.

We can also reduce algae by limiting the amount of sunlight reaching the pond. Since the plants are not growing we don't have many options here. One option though is to add a pond dye to the water until our plants are growing again. Pond dye not only reduces the sunlight but can also make the pond more attractive.

Now is the time to obtain some of the tools and supplies that will be needed when we once again have an active pond. A large tub around 20 to 100 gallons is very useful for housing fish while cleaning, remodeling, or making repairs to a pond. Larger ones also make good quarantine or hospital tanks.

You will want to monitor water chemistry early in the season, at least until the pond is stabilized for the season. You should have water test kits for pH, ammonia, and nitrites at a minimum. Ammonia and nitrites can spike very quickly during the spring when our filters may not be working at maximum capacity. A pond thermometer will let you know when to begin feeding your fish a low protein food.

If you need to replace your filter media do it now before time for the bacteria to establish in your filter. Biological clarifiers should be added after the pond water is in the upper 50's.

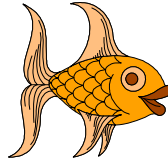
Always have a dechlorinator on hand. You never know when you may have to add a lot of water or do a water change. This can save your fish.

You still have a little time, but after the water has warmed into the 50's you will need fish food and fertilizer for your plants.

Fun (pond) fact!

Reprinted from 3-02 Splash

Most (but not all) Goldfish spawnings take place very early in the morning. Tumultuous activity, which tends to look like a big fight between the fish, can be seen around sunrise.



Time to feed fish?

by Erik Tate

Reprinted from 3-02 Water Garden News

What? When? How much? How often? These can be some common questions when it comes to the feeding of our fish.

Goldfish and koi will usually eat almost anything they are fed. This should not be interpreted as saying that you can feed them whatever you have laying around the house and they'll be healthy. Fish are not concerned with their diets like many of us are, which leaves it up to us to control their feeding for optimum health.

There are so many types and brands of fish food on the market, it can be a little confusing as to which one to buy.

So what should you look for in a fish food? First off, you want to make sure you are feeding the right type of food at the right time. Let's start with what to feed when your water temperature is below 50 degrees, absolutely nothing. Your fish's metabolism is slowed in cold water and they cannot properly digest food, so just don't feed them. They will eat bits of algae and insects as needed to survive.

Water temperature between 50 and 60 degrees warrants feeding a low protein or wheat germ based food. Or, in these temperatures you can feed a basic food, and just less of it. At this time you should be feeding once every 1-3 days.

When the water temperature is between 60 and 86 degrees you can feed a high protein food 1-3 times a day. This food can contain color enhancers or not.

Color enhancing food contains nutrients designed to bring out the color pigmentation in goldfish and koi. Reduce feeding if the water temperature rises above 86 degrees. Feeding in these hot temperatures stresses the fish.

Remember, when you feed your fish, only feed what they eat in about 5 minutes. If there is still food floating 5 minutes later scoop it out and don't feed quite so much next time.

Never feed catfish food to koi or goldfish. This type of food is designed to make fish grow quickly. This is accomplished by including an extremely high fat content. This is not healthy. It will drastically reduce the life span of your fish.

Koi enjoy treats such as fruits and vegetables. They welcome leaf lettuce (not iceberg), grapefruit, and other natural foods.

It is always a good idea to offer fish a variety. Mix up their diet a little. Feed one type of food for a while and then switch to something else. None of us want the same meal everyday...no matter how good it is and neither do your fish.

Topeka Area Water Garden Society
9900 SW K-4 Highway
Topeka, KS 66614

2003 Calendar of Events

Mar. 5 – 9	Wichita Lawn and Garden Show
Mar. 19	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Mar. 20-23	Kansas City Home Show, Bartle Hall
April 16	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
May 21	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
June 18	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
June 21-22	Topeka 12 th Annual Pond Tour
June 21-22	Wichita Pond Tour
June 28-29	Lawrence Pond Tour
July 12-13	Kansas City Pond Tour
July 16	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
August 20	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 17	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 15	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov. 19	TAWGS Monthly Meeting

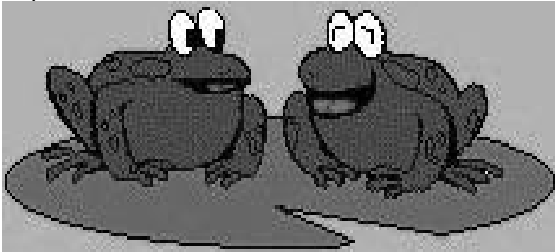
Your Dues are Due if your label reads

2-03 or 3-03

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

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

Tom Platis	President
Topeka	785-478-9514
Becky Coffman	Vice President
Topeka	785-272-6568
Diane Gruver	Secretary
Holton	785-364-3046
Jim Green	Treasurer
Topeka	785-272-7139



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 last weekend 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

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