

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

Volume 6, Issue 9

October 1, 2003

Plants around the pond

By Pat Rokey

I asked Diane if she wanted me to write a column on perennials to be used in and around ponds. She must be pretty desperate because she said yes. My experience is solely from our work in a few other gardens, my experience as a Master Gardener, our own half acre and books. If there's one thing I've learned for sure, you never stop learning about plants.

It's kind of exciting for me to write this because Dick and I have been experimenting with as many perennials as we can afford to buy, not only so we can have a beautiful garden, but also to help others. Another thing we've learned is that flowers grow very differently here than in the Pacific Northwest, which is where most of our nursery plants come from. Ignore those labels! The plants that grow well there in the sun, such as hostas, cannot tolerate all-day sun here. That said, we can now talk about what plants will grow here in Northeast Kansas. I like to plant many kinds of plants around ponds that make the pond look like it's been there awhile. Ornamental grasses are a good step in that direction as you see tall grasses, reeds, etc. around natural ponds here.

Several of my favorite grasses are Miscanthus, Maiden Grass, 5'-6', that is a beautiful green and sways in the wind. There's a smaller version, 'Morning Light', that is a lighter green that glows when the sun shines through it. The Pennisetums, Fountain Grass, are smaller and can have beige or light purple flower heads in midsummer. One very good cultivar is 'Karley Rose', which has beautiful pinkish-purple flowers constantly from June 1st. until frost hits. But, give it room as it's very vigorous and spreads out to 3' across. Panicum 'Shenandoah' is one of the best Switch Grasses as it doesn't "schlump" like other Switch grasses do, and some of the grass blades turn from green to blood red over the summer months. The flowers are tiny and look like a lacy cloud above the leaves. Two other favorites are Schizachyrium 'The Blues' or Little Bluestem. 'The Blues' cultivar is much bluer than the species. It's a rather stiff, short plant of only 2 or 3' and has beautiful blue leaves that change to pinks, corals and red in the late summer and fall. The other favorite is Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster', which has leaves only about a foot tall but the flower heads, which appear in early June, are pinkish turning to bright gold and make

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m., Wed., Oct. 15, 2003

Putting your pond to bed

By Deb Spencer

Waters Edge

the plant 5'-6' tall. It's a great vertical accent.

The Carexes or Sedges, are best used in the shade, but if you're lucky enough to have a pond in the shade, you can use them mixed with ferns and hostas around the pond. I believe some Carexes will grow in a few inches of water, too. Let me know which ones as I've never tried them there.

I'm sure you know about Acorus or Sweet Flag. Acorus 'Ogon' looks good in a biofilter or as a marginal. By some reports, it's not hardy here, but I'm going to place it on a shelf in the pond. If it dies, it's worth buying another one because it's a beautiful small fountain of bright yellow.

When Dick builds me a gro-light apparatus in the basement, I'll be able to hold over a lot of plants and save some money, but that will happen sometime in the distant future as it's #31 on his "honey-do" list and he only just retired last month!

Minutes September 17, 2003

President Tom Platis called the meeting to order and we had self-introductions. Diane Gruver informed the group that the speaker, Justin Woods from AquaTerra Waterscaping in Kansas City had called at 4:30 to say that he had the flu and would not be able to give the program. In his absence we opened the meeting up for questions from the audience. Becky Coffman said that Deb Spencer from Waters Edge would be our speaker next month on putting the pond to bed but that it would be too late for information on repotting iris. Deb told Becky that now is the time to fertilize, divide and repot iris. She said to take the iris out of the pot and hose it off so you can see what you are doing. Cut the tops off and cut rhizomes apart. You don't have to be particularly careful when you do this. For Siberian iris you need to throw away the rhizome that bloomed because it won't bloom again. You can bury the whole rhizome, contrary to the iris that is planted in the ground. Fertilize heavily

now and again next month. Seedpods on iris should be removed so the energy is sent to the roots instead of the pods. You should stop fertilizing your lilies about 3 weeks before frost. Becky also said to bring tropicals in about the time of the first frost. Cut them back and put them in water or let them dry down for the winter and store them in the basement or heated garage. Change your fish food to a more easily digested food when the water temperature drops to the low 60's. You can use a bubbler to keep a hole in the ice open in the wintertime but don't put the pump on the bottom of the pond. The warmer water in the bottom of the pond is where the fish go for the winter and you don't want to displace it with cold water. You can also use a tank heater to keep a hole open in the wintertime, but it is more expensive to run than a bubbler. Drop lilies and lotus pots to the bottom of the pond, however Becky said that she has left her lotus on the shelf and it has survived okay. Most marginal plants are safe on the ledge as well, although there are a few that should be put on the bottom. Becky said she had talked to a person that had put her tropical lily on the bottom of the pond and it had survived, but it is not generally recommended. Becky thought she might try it this winter.

Following the informal discussion on closing your pond and other pond problems, we sang Happy 5th Birthday to ourselves and enjoyed ice cream and cake provided by Helen Platis and Diane Gruver.

Jim Green moved and Helen Platis seconded that the minutes be approved as published in the September Lily Pad. Motion carried. Treasurer Jim Green reported before the meeting we had a total of \$6,252.92 in the combined checking and savings accounts. He had since received several dues and paid some bills during the meeting so the total would be slightly different now.

Diane reminded people that there are a lot of dues due in September since that is the date that we officially chartered TAWGS. There are also several others who have outstanding dues. Please watch your label on your newsletter for when your dues are due. If you get your newsletter by e-mail she tries to remind the ones that are due. If you would like to write an article for the newsletter please have it to Diane by the 25th of the month.

Becky reported that the theme for the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show is "Old World Gardens" and she would appreciate help on the booth. It is usually held the second weekend in February. Jim Green, Mary & Duane Eberhardt, Dean Demoss and Mary Blubaugh volunteered to help Becky with the booth. If anyone else wants to help, give Becky a call.

Jim Green said that he had written a letter to the VA telling them that we would be unable to build the pond this fall. "We probably should have started sooner when the federal government," he said. He said that the committee had set a deadline for a written authorization to be signed and the VA was late so they decided to wait until next spring. He thanked

the committee for their work on the project: Becky, Don Taliaferro, Marikay and especially Doug Peterman for his design work. Doug moved and Larry Sheets seconded that we delay the pond construction until spring. Motion carried. Doug said that Jim had done an excellent job of getting bids and doing the groundwork for the pond. Jim will notify the bidders know that we have delayed the construction and thank them for their participation.

There was no Garden Council report since Joe Breitenstein was out of town. Betty Karnes agreed to represent TAWGS at the monthly Garden Council meetings. Thanks Betty!

Becky and Tom reported on the Member Pond Tour that was held September 7th. They told about the uniqueness of each pond and said it was a lot of fun. The tour ended with a potluck at Lake Shawnee. Thanks to Eberhardt's, Taliaferro's, Jim Green, Peterman's and Lynda Hilderman for sharing their ponds.

Dean Demoss thanked Mary and Duane Eberhardt for their help maintaining the fountain. He said that Ray from Ward Meade had also been a big help.

President Platis said that Dean, Doug and he had worked as the nomination committee and they had trouble finding people willing to take an office. He said that we have a lot of people who are willing to work on committees and we greatly appreciate that, but we also need them to think about taking a leadership role so that the same people don't have to hold office every year. He said that the current officers have all agreed to serve another year: President - Tom Platis, VP – Becky Coffman, Secretary – Diane Gruver, and Treasurer – Jim Green. There were no other nominations. Doug moved that we accept the slate of officers for nomination to be voted on next month. Helen Platis seconded the motion and it carried.

Becky said that she would really appreciate suggestions from the members for programs that they would like for next year. It was suggested that we might have an electrician give a program on pond electrical problems and landscape lighting. We also hope that Justin Wood from AquaTerra Waterscaping will be able to re-schedule next year.

Dean Demoss, Mary Eberhardt and Debbie Durall will bring refreshments to the October meeting. The November meeting will be a potluck and volunteers for refreshments for the February meeting are Lynn Pelton and Susan Kraus.

Tom Platis said the members should turn in their volunteer hours for TAWGS to him and Helen since Mary Pat Fischer has not been at the meetings recently. 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.



TAWGS members enjoy the Member Pond Tour on a visit to the lovely pond of Mary and Duane Eberhardt.

Member Pond Tour held

Photos and story by Becky Coffman

A handful of us met at Duane & Mary Eberhardt's to check out their pond. It sits right out the front window so that they can sit back and look at it no matter what the weather is outside. The pond is big enough that on a real hot day you could think about going in and cooling off. Off to the side of the pond is a gazebo and a big planting area where Duane made a concrete path in a circle using a perform shape of a cobblestone. He has spent a lot of time to bring this all together with a few experiences to go along with it.

The next pond that we went to was Doug & Marikay Peterman's. They have a fairly good size pond in their backyard off a deck. They have spent a lot of time putting in a garden all around it. This year they won the sun garden award from the Topeka Beautification contest. They were in the process of building a new berm to the side of the house for more plants.

Off to Jim Green's house next where he has a small pond in a courtyard. He has most of the courtyard done in cobblestones and no grass to mow. The yard is totally shaded by a Bradford pear tree that he is debating about taking out. His pond has a little fall that dumps out into a stream with a little bridge that you have to walk over to get to his patio area. It is a real nice place to go to relax.

Off to the next pond, which was down the street to Don & Ruth Taliaferro's pond. For those of you who didn't see it in the newspaper they got the best pond from the Topeka Beautification contest. There pond is located on a level area that slops down (which made an ideal stream) into another pool at the bottom of the sloop. They have a real nice sitting area to the side of the pond to watch the fish. While there at the pond we went two doors down to the north to visit their neighbors who won the shade garden award from the Topeka Beautification contest. It is a real nice garden in the woods and in one spot they have a water feature along the pathway with a bench across from it.

Last we went over to a new members house, Lynda Hilderman's where their pond is located in the front and off to the south side. Theirs is a fairly good size pond with a tree that they built a double stream that goes around it. They really did a good job on this and the kids love to get in it and swim with the fish. They have a real nice setting area next to it so they can relax and enjoy watching the kids and fish.

Now that we are through touring all of the ponds we went over to Lake Shawnee to have a great potluck dinner. We ended up near the new garden area to eat. We had a

great time eating and talking to each other about our families and lives. It had turned out to be great weather for the tour. Sorry that those of you who couldn't go weren't there, you were missed. Hopefully you can make it next year.



Members enjoy the quiet shaded courtyard in Jim Green's backyard.



A tree separates streams in Hilderman's beautiful pond.



Peterman's full sun garden provides lots of beautiful blooms on their lilies.

Pond Frog Fun Fact

Reprinted from 9-18-03 Splash

Average live spans of frogs range from 4 - 14 years and the oldest fossils of frogs found are estimated to originate about 200 million years ago.



Taliaferro's pond sits near a deeply shaded woods.



Members enjoy a potluck and visiting at Lake Shawnee following the tour.

Ready for fall?

Reprinted from 9-03 Water Garden News

Taking a few steps to prepare the pond for fall will make the job easier in the long run and contribute to a healthier pond. One of the most significant events of fall is, of course, when leaves begin to fall from the trees above. If these leaves get in the pond and decay it will throw off the ecological balance of a water garden. One option is to use a net to skim leaves off the surface of the pond as they fall, but this can be a daily chore. Also, don't expect a pond skimmer to be able to keep up with all of the leaves. Skimmers are designed to get the occasional leaf or other floating debris. Heavy leaf fall can clog a skimmer several times a day. Installing leaf netting over the pond will be easier to maintain. The netting should be stretched above the water to keep the heavy leaves from pulling the net into the water.

It is best to try to minimize the amount of accumulated sludge, decaying plant debris, etc. from the water. This can be done with a net, by siphon, or by use of a pond vacuum, like the Mini-Vac or the Leaf-Eater. This is also a good time to begin using Microbe Lift's Autumn/Winter Prep. This will help break down the remaining sludge build-up.

FISH -The water temperature is dropping this time of year and we should begin feeding our 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 less than 25 percent. A wheat germ based food is good at this time as it is easily digested. Pond Care's Spring & Autumn Food is an excellent food at this time of year. It is formulated with a unique blend of amino acids and minerals to help supplement the dietary requirements of koi and goldfish in cool water.

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.

Reminder: The water temperature is what is relevant, not the air temperatures. A good pond thermometer makes things easier.

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. Now that we have prepared the water garden for the fall season, winter is not far behind.

Why fall food for fish?

Reprinted from 9-03 Splash

Special Food Formulations for the cooler water temperatures of fall and winter are available for the pond fish and we are asked often if it is really necessary to switch to this special food? Here is the reason:

Koi do not have stomachs and digest all of their food with their intestines. As the water cools, the Koi's metabolism slows and with it their ability to digest food. Fall/Winter food is formulated with more vegetable matter (which is easier to digest) than summer formulas.

It is equally important to stop feeding completely when the water temperature dips below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, because the food will no longer be digested at all and will sicken the fish if it remains in the intestine!

Water Garden Tips

The end of summer means plant leaves began to die back more quickly. Remember to remove this dying foliage from plants before it has a chance to fall into the water and decay.

You should stop feeding your aquatic plants about a month before the first frost in your area. Even in areas that don't normally have frost, plant growth slows in the shorter, cooler days of the fall and winter months.

Spring Water Garden Seminar

March 26-27, 2004

Stoney Creek Inn - St. Joseph, MO

Friday March 26

5 - 10 p.m. Registration and Vendors Exhibit Area
8 - 9 p.m. Greg Speichert will present an informal question and answer session

Saturday, March 27

7 - 8:15 a.m. Registration
8:30 - 9:30 **Greg Speichert**
An introduction to water plants
9:30 - 10:00 Exhibit area open with refreshments
10 - 10:45 **Mia Keske**
Chemicals, pond care, water quality & the health of your pond
11 - 11:45 **Bob White**
Sizing pumps for applications & building waterfalls and streams
11:45 - 1:00 Lunch in the Exhibit hall
1 - 1:45 p.m. **Ron Knutson**
Building a budgeting a water feature
2 - 2:45 **Eric Wood**
How to create a bog and planning a filtration system for a healthier pond
2:45 - 3:15 Break in the Exhibit Hall and visit with vendors
3:15 - 4:00 **Todd Howe**
Attracting birds & dragonflies to your pond

For room reservations call Stoney Creek Inn and let them know you are attending the Water Garden Seminar
800-659-2220
www.Stoneycreekinn.com

Reservation Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

Registration: \$35 per person if received prior to 2/14/04. It's \$45 per person after that and at the door. Registration fee includes conference meetings, Friday night reception and Saturday lunch. There is a \$15 cancellation fee prior to 3-1-04. No refunds after 3-1-04. Cancellation must be in writing.

Please send completed registration form and full payment to:

St. Joseph Area Water Garden Society
3607 Robin Lane
St. Joseph, MO 64506

For information: www.SJWATERGARDEN.COM
watergardennews@msn.com
816-233-9247

Give fish place to hide

Reprinted from 9-18-03 Splash

When the plants in the pond start dying down for the winter they leave your precious fish pitifully exposed to predators! Hawks, owls, etc... consider koi and goldfish a gourmet dessert! Take steps to prevent them landing on the predator dinner plate, give them places to hide:

1) Take large terra cotta flower pots and put them in the bottom of the pond turned on their sides (the fish can scoot into them). Be sure the pots do not contain residue from fertilizer, etc.

2) Cover the pond with a net even if there are no large trees nearby.

3) Use two foot sections of large white PVC pipe and put them on their side in the pond so the fish can hide in them.

How many fish are safe for winter?



Reprinted from Oct. 10, 2001 Splash

The most basic requirement for your fish during the winter months is oxygen! If there are too many fish in the pond and the water starts to freeze over or there are many cloudy days in succession the oxygen level in the pond can get dangerously low! The easiest way to prevent this is to make sure that there are not too many fish in the pond (this problem can be seen in reverse in the summer, when the hot, still weather can cause drops in oxygen in the water).

The general rule of thumb is 1 inch of fish per 1 square foot of surface area. More fish can be kept in the pond, but adequate measures have to be taken to make sure the pond can sustain them.

The easiest way to get oxygen into the pond is by letting a pump bubble. Set the pump on a plant shelf or on a couple of bricks so the warm water at the bottom does not get sucked to the top.

Tips for getting ready for winter

Reprinted from 10-15-01 Splash

- Do not disconnect the pump and filter until about 1 week after all feeding of the fish has stopped, so the filter has time to take care of fish waste before being disconnected.
- If the pump is moved inside, clean it well and store it in a container of clean water to keep seals moist.
- Clean the filter well before storing it.
- Ponds which are overcrowded with fish will need filtration all year.

Topeka Area Water Garden Society
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Topeka, KS 66614

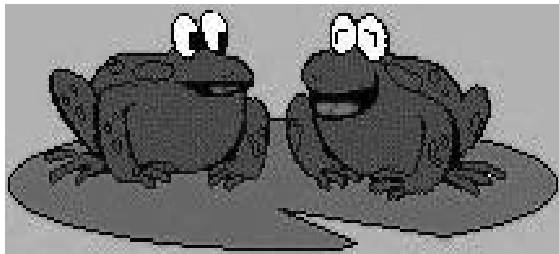
Calendar of Events

Nov. 19	TAWGS Potluck Meeting
Dec.	No Meeting
2004	
January	No Meeting
February 13-15	Topeka Lawn & Garden Show
February 18	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
March 3 – 7	Wichita Lawn and Garden Show
March 17	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
March 26-27	St. Joe Water Garden Seminar
Apr. 10 – 21	Binkley Tulip Days
Apr. 21	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
May 19	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
June 16	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
July 21	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Aug. 18	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 15	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 20	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov. 17	TAWGS Pot Luck & Election

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads
9-03, 10-03 or 11-03 (or earlier)**
Please renew as soon as possible to continue
receiving the newsletter.

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

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Becky Coffman	Vice President
Topeka	785-272-6568
Diane Gruver	Secretary
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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:

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