

Volume 8, Issue 2

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

March 1, 2005



Booth Chairman Bob Saathoff takes a last minute look at the water gardens in the TAWGS booth at the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show.

L&G Booth wins top honors

By Diane Gruver

The hard work of the lawn and garden show booth committee paid off on Friday when they learned that the TAWGS booth had been awarded first place in the educational exhibits. The committee of Bob and Cheryl Saathoff, Marikay and Doug Peterman, Don and Ruth Taliaferro and Dean Demoss started designing and working on the ponds during the winter at Bob Whitehead's warehouse. Floyd and Diane Gruver joined the committee on Monday before the show opened to help haul equipment and rock to the Expocentre with their car trailer. The four couples and Dean began building the ponds in earnest on Tuesday morning and continued until late Thursday afternoon when the final touches were added.

Bob commended his committee for their creative thinking and team work in working on the booth. "It was synergy at its best," he said.

Thanks go to Bob Whitehead for the use of his building and the limestone rocks, Puddles-N-Pads for loaning equipment and expertise for the booth, Dennis Lowry for the beautiful arbor, the VA for loaning a tree and water plants, Jerald Binkley for the moss rocks and Capitol Concrete Products. Thanks also to Betty Karnes who helped by calling for volunteers to fill the 40 some slots of time to man the booth.

Volunteers who worked at least one shift at the

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m., Wed., Mar. 16, 2005

Opening your Pond
Eric Wood, Puddles-N-Pads

booth were: Don & Ruth Taliaferro, Betty Karnes, Dale & Earlene Jirik, Duane & Mary Eberhardt, Bob and Becky Coffman, Mary and Stan Bechtold, Barrie & Carol Gnaggy, Jon and Mary Pat Fischer, Lynn Pelton, Hi Stockwell, Mike Bradley, Doug & Marikay Peterman, Floyd & Diane Gruver, Tom & Helen Platis, Larry & Karyn Sheets, Gerald and Donnis Hodges, Joe Weir and Trudy O'Shea-Weir, and Bob & Cheryl Saathoff. Thanks to all who gave of their time. It was a great project and one we can be proud of. Speaking for Floyd and myself, it was also a lot of fun!



A pondless waterfall (left) and a conventional pond were featured in the booth to demonstrate different ways to build water features.

Lighting your pond and landscape

Surrounded by various types of pond lighting, Kip Walker showed TAWGS members different ways to install lighting in their ponds at the February meeting.

"Throw away the wire nuts that come with the pond lights," Kip said. "They are not water proof." He recommended direct bury silicone wire nuts that can be purchased at most hardware stores. You can mix most brands of lighting as much as you want if there is room on the transformer. To determine how many lights you

can put on a transformer add up the wattage of each light to be attached to the transformer. It is best to be one light under the wattage on the transformer. On a single line the lights get dimmer as you get further from the transformer. You can eliminate this problem by looping the wire back to the transformer. Make sure you have positive to positive and negative to negative or you will blow the transformer. You can also make a hub where all lights are connected to one connector. It is the safest and easiest but can be unsightly.

Kip said that the most cost effective lights are sealed beam. He likes fiber optic lights because you can do a lot of neat things with them such as color wheels, which have to be outside the pond. Although LED lights are not available in pond lights yet, they are coming very soon. He said they are less expensive and use a tenth of electricity plus there is nothing to burn out.

The biggest problem with pond lights is water leaking into the fixture. Make sure you tighten all the bolts, even on a new fixture. Another tip is to be sure that you leave enough extra wire around the light when you install it so that you can lift it above water to replace the bulb when necessary. Never touch a halogen bulb as it will shorten its life. The fixtures that Puddles-N-Pads carry use either MR 16 or MR 11 bulbs, which refers to the shape of the bulb. Don't use a bigger bulb than the light fixture calls for. Using a 50 watt bulb in a 20 watt fixture will create a problem and can melt the fixture, even in water.

When placing your lights, try to place them so they won't shine directly in your eyes. It gives a "deer in the headlight" effect and it not very pleasing. Point the light down and away from the eye. Lights can be placed in the waterfall, in the pond or outside the pond.

A new item that Kip is excited about is a combination light and Sony camera. It is like a video camera which you hook up to a TV so you can view your fish from inside the house. It will be demonstrated at the Lawn and Garden Show.



Kip is a sales rep for Lillypads and Landscapes and has worked for them for four years. He covers six states with sales in 12 states. He has a background in stage and concert lighting and has learned a lot about lighting in the last 20 years. "I like to experiment with lighting," Kip said.

Members commented afterwards that they had learned a great deal about lighting from Kip's presentation and were anxious to try his suggestions.

TAWGS February 16, 2005 Minutes

President Tom Platis called the meeting to order with self introductions. Vice President Floyd Gruver introduced Kip Walker who gave a very informative presentation on pond lighting.

Refreshments provided by Helen Platis and Diane Gruver were served following Kips presentation. Carol Gnaggy and Donnis Hodges volunteered to provide refreshments in March.

Jim Green moved and Carol Gnaggy seconded that the minutes be approved as mailed in the December Lily Pad. Motion carried.

Vice President Floyd Gruver gave the tentative lineup for the programs for 2005. Secretary/newsletter editor Diane Gruver asked people to be sure to check their labels to know when there dues were due.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that the club has \$2,692.10 in checking and 2,132.64 in savings for a total of 4,824.74. It was reported that the president and treasurer had prepared the proper papers to be sent in for our final application for our 501 3 C Status. Thanks to Tom and Jim for their work on this application.

Mary Ann Bechtold reported that the Pond Tour committee had met at her home in January. She was pleased with the turn out and feels that we have things pretty well lined out for the pond tour which will be June 25 and 26. Blackburns have been added to the list of nurseries that will sell tickets this year. Hi Stockwell showed the group the beautiful handouts that he designed to hand out at the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show. He said they cost him about 14 cents each to print. He is also working on a different format for the pond tour map/ticket this year.

Joe Breitenstein asked members to bring their plants to the flower show at the lawn and garden show. He said that the Garden Council plant sale will be the last weekend in April and he is still looking for a place to hold it.

There was no unfinished or new business.

President Platis reported that the Johnson Co. Home and Garden Show will be February 24-27, Wichita Lawn and Garden Show is March 3 – 6, and Binkley's Tulip Time is April 13-24.

Congratulations were offered to Duane and Mary Eberhardt who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Bob and Cheryl Saathoff were congratulated on wining first in the Topeka Christmas lighting contest.

Duane and Mary Eberhardt won the Lily Pad light fixture donated by Puddles-N-Pads.

Meeting adjourned.

Winter planning for summer enjoyment

by RANDALL TATE, Chief Manager, The Water Garden

Winter is the time when most of us just aren't able to enjoy our ponds, it may be cold and wet in your area and not a good time to sit out by the pond. This makes it a good time to plan ways to improve the enjoyment of our ponds. So let's sit by the fireplace and make some plans.

If you don't have moving water already it is easy to add a pump and fountain or waterfall to add the sound of moving water to your garden. You only need a place to plug the pump into an electrical outlet. The sound of

water adds immensely to the enjoyment of a water garden, as well as benefiting the health and appearance of the pond.

Or maybe you already have a waterfall that you would like to have improved. Now is the time to make those plans. A waterfall can be altered by changing the pump to a lighter or heavier flow, changing the rock work, or by adding a stream. If you are happy with the look of your rock work, but the water doesn't flow over it well, some waterfall foam sprayed into the crevices may be an easy solution.

You may want to consider ways that you can decrease the amount of maintenance that you have with your water feature. If you find that you are getting debris into your pond in rainy weather you will want to build a dam or swale to divert the water around your pond instead of allowing the runoff to flow into it. If your present filter system does not include a pre-filter then you may be able to decrease the amount of time spent cleaning pump screens by adding a mechanical pre-filter to your system. If you are using a submersible pump to push water into an external filter you are probably cleaning the pump intake almost daily. If you add a pre-filter such as the Signal Pond Products 750 filter or the Pondmaster PM1000 then you may be able to go a few weeks between cleanings. It is much easier to remove debris from the water before it is pumped. Pumping dirty water and then trying to remove the debris is much harder because the pump acts as a blender making a lot of the debris much smaller and harder to remove.

The ultimate pre-filter is a skimmer. You can retrofit your pond with a full size skimmer, such as the Savio Skimmerfilter or Atlantic Skimmer, but it may take a half-days work or more. It should be worth your time and expense as this will greatly reduce the amount of time spent maintaining the pond. There are also skimmers that can be more easily retrofitted to the pond such as the Pondmaster Skimmer/Filter or the skimmers by Cal Pump. While this are not as beneficial as a full-size skimmer they can still help reduce maintenance.

Have you been struggling with green water in the past and are ready for the easy solution? If so, now is a good time to plan for adding an ultraviolet sterilizer to the pond.

Winter is also a great time for planning a new water garden. If you have been in the hobby for any length of time you have probably filled up your pond with all the plants and fish that it will hold. So, why not build another pond and make it larger this time to allow you to add a new fish or plant occasionally? You can use the information that you learned from your first pond to improve on the new one. As long as the ground is not frozen you can construct the pond throughout the winter months without the rush to finish before the growing season. The process of building the pond is a lot easier when you can take your time. You will have plenty of time to finish and the pond will be ready for fish and plants as soon as spring arrives.

Care should be taken if you are digging your pond and don't get the liner installed before a rain. You

should use cheap builders plastic (available at your local builders supply store) to cover the excavation to keep the rainwater from damaging your work until you have the opportunity to install the pond liner.

While these are just a few of the countless improvements anyone can make to their water gardens, we hope you have found inspiration and can still put up with a few more weeks of winter.



Bob Saathoff (l) and Doug and Marikay Peterman look at plants in the Gage Greenhouse.

GAGE Greenhouse open house held

Several members took advantage of the invitation to the open house of the new greenhouse at Gage Park. The City Parks and Recreation held the open house February 6th to show off their "state of the art" greenhouse where they grow plants for the for all the city's flower beds and also plantings along Kansas Avenue.

2005 TAWGS Programs

- March 16 – Eric Wood, Opening your pond
- April 20 – Brad Cheney, Most common mistakes made and how to correct them
- May 18 – Vivian Smith, Planting without pots
- June 15 - TBA
- July 20 - TBA
- August 17 – Deb Spencer, More than you ever wanted to know about algae
- Sept. 21 - Eric Wood, Safety in and around the pond
- October 19 – Deb Spencer, Closing your pond
- November – Pot Luck Supper – no program

Cold weather pond care!

Reprinted from 2-21-02 Splash

It is pretty cold in most parts of the country and here are just a few reminders for cold weather care of your pond:

Do make sure the pond is not completely frozen over for any length of time (especially if Koi are present)

Do not hit on the ice to open it up, the sound waves can hurt or even kill your fish!

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

Calendar of Events

March 3-6	Wichita Lawn & Garden Show
March 16	TAWGS monthly meeting
April 13-24	Binkley Tulip Days
April 20	TAWGS monthly meeting
April 30	Garden Council Plant Sale
May 18	TAWGS monthly meeting
June 15	TAWGS monthly meeting
June 25-26	Topeka Pond Tour
July 20	TAWGS monthly meeting
August 17	TAWGS monthly meeting
September 21	TAWGS monthly meeting
October 19	TAWGS monthly meeting
November 16	TAWGS Pot Luck Supper

Pond Tip

Proper placement of a pond de-icer is essential. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. The de-icer should generally be placed at the edge of the pond in a shallow area and well-shielded from wind. In extremely cold weather, it may be necessary to use plywood to create a wind barrier.

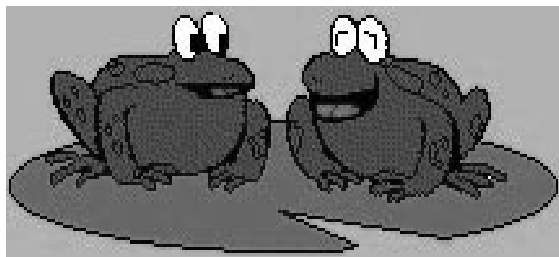
**Your Dues are Due if your label
reads 2-05 or 3-05
(or anything in 2004)**

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

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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 third weekend of each month.

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