



The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

The objective of the society is to encourage a greater appreciation and interest in water gardening and aquatic plants, to disseminate information about those interests and to help our members stimulate the study and culture of water gardens.

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November 1, 2005



Deb Spencer (left) talks to Allen & Connie Ellis after her presentation at the October TAWGS meeting.

Closing your pond

Deb Spencer gave a very informative program at the October TAWGS meeting on what we should be doing with our ponds to get ready for winter.

"This will be especially good for the people who are going through their first winter," Deb said. It was also good information/reminders for those of us who have had our ponds for several years.

Fall – September/October

- Stop fertilizing plants except for tropical lilies and water hawthorne
- Divide iris, reeds and rushes – iris can also be divided after blooming in the spring
- Trim dying foliage – trim iris 3-5" tall, trim cat tails above the water because they need to be able to breathe
- Cut back anacharis if you have it in pots
- Dredge or vacuum muck off the bottom – 2 inches of sludge is not good for your fish because it will cause gasses which are toxic to fish
- Check the KH and adjust it up
- Use the last application of sludge eating bacteria and barley products. A barley and peat combination works well on streams. Liquid bacteria works faster but is more expensive. Barley pellets can be put in the bio-fall whereas barley bales need sunlight to work effectively

Monthly Meeting

6:30 p.m., Wed., Nov. 16, 2005

Historic Ward Meade Park
Pot Luck Dinner- note change of time
Bring covered dish, table service and pictures of your pond

- Skim/net for leaves - you can eliminate a serious cleaning by netting the pond in spite of the disadvantages of it keeping the birds out and the frogs in. Use a tall center pole in the pond so you can establish a tent for the so the leaves will slide off. Turn the excess net under and anchor it with bricks or landscape pens
- Bring in vertical tropicals (cannas, papyrus, umbrellas, taros) before the first frost

What about the fish?

- Check for signs of disease
- Switch to hi carb/low protein foods when pond temp drops below 60 degrees – proteins are hard to digest and will sit and rot in the fish's intestines
- Stop feeding altogether at 45 – 50 degrees
- Minimize debris/sludge – fall is the best time for a full cleanup because the fish are stronger in the fall
- Clean pond or perform water changes – pump the water off the bottom
- If you have koi and use salt – adjust salt up to 0.1 ppm. Salt is a natural medication but plants do not like it

After heavy frost – October-December

- Trim dead foliage
- Lower zone 6 plants to bottom (pickerel, parrot feather, cardinal flower, lobelias, water parsley, lizard tail)
- Bring in tropical lilies if you plan to over winter them
- Stop feeding fish
- Shut down/clean the bio filters
- Turn off waterfalls, streams and fountains – Deb admits this is a controversial subject – she prefers to turn them off while others advocate leaving them on

- Install bubblers – use a small pump to make water bubble near the surface to keep it clear of ice. Do not disturb water on the bottom of the pond – place the pump on a shelf.
- Install a de-icer to plug in when ice covers the pond over a week. Melt the ice – do not try to chop a hole in it because that can killyour fish. If the pump in the skimmer is still running, anchor the de-icer near the skimmer to keep the area open

Winter – December – March

- Remove net when snow or ice threatens to drag it down
- Keep an area open when ice covers the pond for more than a week

Review of major points

- Stop feeding fish at 45-50 degrees
- Dirty ponds cause fish death and water quality problems
- Avoid structural and equipment damage
- Clean filters if pumps are still running – if they aren't running put them in the bottom of the pond or keep in water

At the request of Floyd Gruver, Deb also addressed concerns of an older pond. Things to watch for are:

- Rock shifting
- Stone stability
- Make sure you have a stable entryway to the pond
- Check plumbing – rubber fittings can deteriorate
- Add bottom drains

New ideas that would be fun to try include:

- Fish balls (plastic balls that fish swim in)
- Stepping stones through/over the pond forming a bridge
- Bridges
- New plants
- New critters and fish
- Floating plant islands
- Indoor ponds

Deb is co-owner of Waters Edge in Lawrence, is a member of TAWGS, and is considered an expert in her field. We appreciate her willingness to give informative programs to TAWGS and her support of our club projects.

TAWGS Minutes 10-19-05

President Tom Platis called the October meeting to order with self introductions. Deb Spencer gave a very informative program on closing the pond and addressed some concerns that owners of established ponds should think about.

Following the program, delightful Halloween finger foods and witches brew were served by Bob and Cheryl Saathoff and Don and Ruth Taliaferro, who were in Halloween costumes.



When the meeting resumed President Platis

thanked the Saathoff's and Taliaferro's for the refreshments and said that we will not need anyone to bring refreshments in November since it is our pot luck. Duane Eberhardt moved and Jim Green seconded that the minutes be approved as printed in the October Lily Pad. Motion carried.



Mary Eberhardt (right in front) gets some refreshments as hosts (from left) Bob Saathoff, Don Taliaferro, Cheryl Saathoff and Ruth Taliaferro look on.

Duane Eberhardt announced that he is cleaning his pond and has lots of fish to give away.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that the club has \$2,716.13 in the checking account and \$1,147.11 in the savings account for a total of \$3,863.24.

President Tom presented the slate of officers to be elected for the 2006 club year: Duane Eberhardt – president; Floyd Gruver – vice president; Diane Gruver – secretary; and Jim Green – treasurer. Don Taliaferro moved and Mary Pat Fischer seconded that the slate be elected. Motion carried. Tom said that Jim and Diane had agreed to hold the office another year with the understanding that someone would work with them this year to train for the office next year. Mary Pat Fischer volunteered to help Jim as treasure and Don Taliaferro volunteered to help Diane with the minutes. Thanks to both of them for volunteering!!!

Diane suggested that we need to be thinking about the 2006 Pond Tour and we need someone to chair the committee as well as select the date. Please consider being the chairman and step forward at the November meeting.

Floyd suggested that we need someone to greet people at the door. At one time it was discussed that the people who provide refreshments should be the greeters but they are always too busy setting up the refreshment table. It was decided that it would be better to try to get a volunteer for the next meeting, just like we do for refreshments. Mary Pat Fischer volunteered to be greeter at the November meeting. Since we will have the pot luck next month we decided to start the meeting at **6:30** instead of 7:00. Please bring your table service, covered dish and your pond pictures to share at the meeting.

Bob Saathoff reported that the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show will be February 17 – 19 with "Nature's Playground" as the theme. He said he was

asked to meet with representatives from the Topeka Beautification Assn. and Shawnee County to see if we could work together to combine the three booths. Jim Green moved and Joe Breitenstein seconded that we give Bob the authority to work with the other 2 organizations to try to create something really neat. Motion carried. Bob will try to come up with a dollar figure for next month's meeting.

Joe Breitenstein reported that the Apple Fest went pretty well but the attendance was down because of the flood that day at Rossville and north Topeka. He asked if TAWGS would participate in the Council Garden Sale in April but was not given a definite answer. He also reported that Ruth Puff is doing real well right now and her cancer is in remission. Ruth is the widow of the late David Puff who founded TAWGS.

Tom Platis thanked everyone who worked at the Apple Fest.

Dean Demoss said that he is waiting on Ray Schroeder to let him know when they need to move the lilies and close the fountain. He also said that the lilies need to be repotted next spring so people need to put the repotting lily party on their calendar for next April.

Meeting adjourned.

Thanks from your president

By Tom Platis

I would like to thank all the members of this club for the support they have given me and all the projects that we have completed during the last three years that I have been president. I believe we should all be proud of the contributions we have made to this community - from constructing ponds at various locations such as the VA hospital, Midland Hospice and others to name a few, to the care and maintenance of the ponds at Old Prairie Town (Ward Mead Park).

If the membership supports the new president as it did me, the new president has nothing to worry about. In my lifetime, I have not met a finer group of people anywhere.

Thanks again for allowing me to serve as your president.



Helen Platis, Allen Ellis and Tom Platis dish up sauerkraut for Apple Fest

Apple Fest dampened by flood

Major flooding in Rossville and north Topeka

caused a smaller than expected crowd at the 2005 Apple Fest at Old Prairie Town in Ward Meade Park the first of October, but event organizers still considered it successful.

TAWGS members who volunteered for the annual event were: Tom & Helen Platis, Diane & Floyd Gruver, Walt & Jeannine Miller, Joe Breitenstein, Marikay Peterman, Linda Reynolds, Mary Ann Bechtold, Gerald & Donnis Hodges, Duane & Mary Eberhardt, Allen & Connie Ellis, Carol Gnagy, Betty Karnes and Larry & Caryn Sheets. Many thanks to everyone who helped at the festival.

Water plants Aquatic or Swamp Milkweed

By Duane Van Dolah



Asclepias

Pond owners that are interested in adding butterflies as visitors of their pond should start planting Asclepias, common name is butterfly weed and milkweed. *Asclepias incarnata* is a species that will reach a height of 24-36 inches and can tolerate up to 5 inches of water. It is a thick-stemmed perennial with dense branches and opposite, narrowly ovate, mid-green leaves. The leaves are 3-6 inches long with some fall color. Flowers are small and held in umbels at the top of each stem. They range in color from clear white to light pink to dark rose. Bitones are also possible. Seed heads are half-moon shaped with black seeds. This perennial blooms in late summer with full sun in zones 3-11.

A cultivar, *Asclepias incarnata* 'Ice Ballet', is known as the white butterfly plant. Pure white flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds and make great cut flowers.

Asclepias lanceolata is the coastal milkweed. It stands 24-36 inches tall with a pale pink flower. It needs moist soil or up to 2 inches of water over it in zones 6-8.

Asclepias perennis, the aquatic milkweed, is a small, compact, bushy plant with willow-like leaves and white to pale rose flowers. Grow this plant in sun or shade with moist soil to up to 6 inches of water. It grows 12-24 inches tall in zones 6-11. Propagation on all milkweeds is by cutting in spring before flowers set and by seed.

Pond Tip

You should always have any electrical devices used in your pond, such as lights, pumps, de-icers, etc., protected by a ground fault interrupter.

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

Calendar of Events

November 16 TAWGS Pot Luck Supper
2006

February 17-19 – Topeka Lawn and Garden Show

March 1-5 – Wichita Lawn & Garden Show

Water Garden Tips

Completely draining and refilling your pond upsets the natural ecosystem. Doing so will delay the development of a healthy, clear, and balanced pond. This practice should be avoided if at all possible.

Submersible pumps that are turned off for the winter should be kept in water. Allowing a pump to dry can reduce its lifespan.

Your Dues are Due if your label reads anything in 05

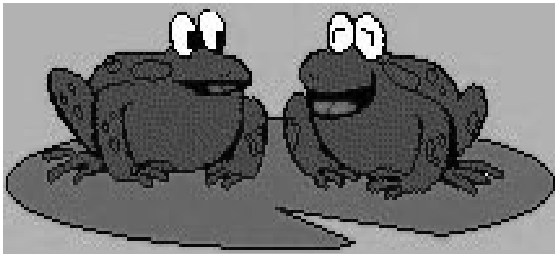
Please renew as soon as possible to continue receiving the newsletter.

Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

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

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at Ward Meade Park unless otherwise publicized. Dues are \$15 per single or \$20 per family and can be sent to Jim Green, 5701 SW Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614.



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. 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.