



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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June 1, 2006



Dave Bartels (right) tells TAWGS members and guests about his plans for the Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee. Others pictured are (l-r) Pat Rokey, Jim Green, Ruth Taliaferro, Marikay Peterman, Deb Dunkin, Dale Jirik, Doug Peterman, Dave Heineman, Mary Bechtold, Helen Platis, Leland Heifner, Mrs. Heifner and Tom Platis.

Bartels shows park's improvements

Dave Bartels, Park Supervisor for the Shawnee Co. Parks and Rec. relayed his vision for the ongoing development of the Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee at the TAWGS May meeting. He pointed out the new additions this spring and outlined what he hopes to become a reality in the future. "We want to connect all three gardens," he said.

The wooden gazebo, which had been in place several years, was replaced with a metal one this spring, Dave said. The metal is not as easily defaced by vandals as the wooden one was, he said, and it should last a lot longer. They are in the process of leveling the paths, etc., to meet The American Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

The six ponds in the garden are all supplied by one pump, which draws water from the lake, Dave said. All have liners because they wouldn't hold water without one. One of the ponds is designated as the pond that TAWGS donated the money for and it is the one that Pat and Dick Rokey are caring for, with the continuing support from TAWGS. The overflow from that pond to the lake will have a 12' x 60' bridge which will lead to the new restroom area, which also contains a bride's changing area.

Dave sees a large parking area replaced with a

Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m. June 21, 2006

Historic Old Prairie Town
(formerly Ward Meade Park)

Program – Brad Cheney
Problems around ponds – container gardens

fountain and living wall, similar to the one at Powell Gardens. When asked about a timetable, Dave said they will start tearing out the parking lot after July 4th and the rest will depend on the availability of money and volunteers. To the north of the fountain, paths will meander under the existing trees through grass and flower beds to a roofed shelter house. "I see this area as something very simple, serene, knitted together," Dave said. "I think it is going to be kind of cool."

A person with the ability to visualize great things, Dave has been with Shawnee County Parks since 1988. We're sure he has already seen some of his visions become reality and we await the future with great expectations.



Guest Jerold Binkley (center) from TBA talks about the rocks he and Bob Saathoff (second from right) have hauled to the gardens. Others pictured are (l-r) Michael Bradley, Marikay Peterman, Floyd Gruver, Doug Peterman, Pat Rokey and Earlene Jirik.



Loading up food in the chow line at the pot luck supper are: (r-l) Pat and Tom Routh, Barb and Larry Shipman and Dick and Pat Rokey.

TAWGS Minutes 5-17-06

TAWGS members enjoyed a change of pace in May by meeting at the Ensley House at Lake Shawnee for a tour of the Ensley Botanical Gardens and a fish fry and pot luck dinner. Honored guests at the meeting were representatives of the Topeka Beautification Assn., Shawnee Co. Parks and Rec. and others who helped TAWGS with the pond display at the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show in February. Thanks to fisherman Bob Saathoff, who not only provided the fish but cooked it to perfection, and to his wife Cheryl for her hard work in coordinating the meal and the table decorations.

Following the delicious meal, president Duane Eberhardt called the meeting to order with self introductions. Bob Saathoff thanked the guests for coming and for their support during the lawn and garden show. He said that it proved that the three organizations (TBA, TAWGS and Shawnee Co.) could work together to build an awesome display. A walking tour of the gardens with Dave Bartels followed, which was very interesting.

The meeting continued upon returning to the Ensley house. Don Taliaferro moved and Dale Jirik seconded that the April minutes be approved as printed in the May newsletter. Motion carried. Jim Green gave the treasurer's report saying that the only expense this month had been the \$250 for the 10 money orders for the pond tour hosts. He reported \$3,932.11 in the bank and \$1,158.19 in savings for a total of \$5,090.30. Dale Jirik moved and Michael Bradley seconded that the treasurer's report be accepted. Motion carried.

Pond Tour chairman Mary Bechtold thanked Duane Eberhardt for acquiring the 10 ponds for the 2006 pond tour, June 24-25. She said that Hi Stockwell has done a terrific job in putting together the guide/map. She also thanked everyone for their help.

Hi reported that he has a few posters for the pond tour still available. He said that he had personally visited the 10 ponds that Duane secured and that Duane had done a good job of getting unique ponds for the tour. Hi asked for a few volunteers to help assemble the guide when they get it back from the printer around the last of May.

Donnis Hodges passed around a sheet for

volunteers to sign up to help pond sit. If you haven't signed up to help yet, please call Donnis at 246-0496.

Diane Gruver reported that the plant sale resulted in a profit of \$272. She said that although it rained again this year it wasn't as bad as it had been some years. She thanked everyone who helped at the sale.

Diane asked Dave Bartels what he needs from TAWGS to help at the garden. He said initially he needs some people to help with the heavy work (concrete removal, etc.) and will probably need some help next spring with some planting. Pat Rokey presented a list of plants that she would like to buy to put around the pond that is officially designated as the TAWGS pond, saying the cost will be approximately \$600. Michael Bradley moved and Don Taliaferro seconded that we allocate \$600 for the initial planting. Motion carried. Floyd Gruver suggested that we keep our minds open for the need for additional funds at a later time. He also thanked everyone who helped re-pot lilies at Ward Meade April 22nd and said that he still has bare root lilies left that he has in the back of his pickup – free for the taking! He said that 6 lilies had already been potted for Lake Shawnee and Dave had taken another 20 bare root lilies to be planted. (Floyd and Bob Saathoff potted several lilies for Lake Shawnee on May 22nd and positioned several more bare root lilies in rocks in the ponds.)

Earlene Jirik announced that she still has space left on the Meade Garden Club bus tour June 30th. The tour will begin at 7:00 a.m. at the Hypermart parking lot and go to a display garden in Emporia, the Wichita Botanical Gardens, Hesston Stone Creek Nursery and Arboretum and the Hays House for dinner on the way home. All for \$55! Several members signed up.

Diane asked if there was any interest in a Member Tour in July. She proposed meeting at Duane and Mary's Eberhardt's, going by Donnis and Gerald Hodges, touring Gruver's pond in Holton and ending up at Tom and Pat Routh's near Havensville, for a pot luck. Several expressed an interest in the tour so we will pick a Sunday in July (probably the 23rd or the 30th). Watch for further details.

Meeting adjourned.



2006 Door Greeters and Refreshments

Month	Door Greeters	Refreshments
June		Pettermans, Sheets
July		Jiriks, Betty Karnes
Aug	Don Taliaferro	Taliaferros, Saathoffs
Sept.		Pot Luck
Oct.		Eberharts
Nov.		Pot Luck

2006 TAWGS programs

Speaker	Topic
June 21 - Brad Cheney – Container gardens	Problems around ponds
July 19 - TBA	
August 16 - Kip Walker	Pond Lights and new products
Sept. 20 David Bartels Garden House at Lake Shawnee and tour of gardens	Pot luck at Ensley
Oct. – Deb Spencer and waterfalls	Disappearing fountains
Nov 15 - No Program	Pot Luck

Auto-Fill:

The good, the bad, and the ugly

by ERIK TATE, Operations Manager
Reprinted from 5-06 Water Garden News

The Good: Auto-fill devices have become more and more common in water garden installations. The idea of keeping the pond full at all times is great. An auto-fill is hooked up to a water source so that water will be added when the pond's water level drops due to evaporation. A float is installed at the level of the water surface, as the float drops with the water level a valve is opened allowing new water to enter the pond.

The Bad: Most auto-fill float valves do not remove chlorine from the water. Small amounts of chlorine will dissipate on its own before harming fish. Any amount of chlorine can harm the gills of your fish, prolonged exposure or exposure in high doses can kill the fish. If using a float valve, you may wish to add a little dechlorinator on a regular basis to help neutralize the tap water additives. There are kits like the PondFil Float that use a cartridge filter that removes chlorine from the water prior to entering the pond.

The Ugly: A leak in the pond may go undetected using an auto-fill. When a leak occurs you will be adding larger amounts of new tap water and larger amounts of chlorine, eventually leading to gill failure in the fish and ultimately death.

Even Uglier: Mechanical parts don't last forever. If the float valve fails this could mean a constant flow of tap water entering the pond.

Bottom Line: Auto-fill float valves can save you the trouble of dragging a hose to your pond when evaporation drops the water level. This can be a big help, but if using this type of device it is good to have a little knowledge of the benefits and risks and to monitor the fish and the valve regularly.

From the desk of Eric and Trina



Just a reminder, when you come in to Puddles and Pads you need to ask for your TAWGS discount at the register. Although we recognize most of you, it is hard for us to remember who is in the club and who's not. It is

too awkward for us to ask.

Thanks again and happy pondering.

Frogs, toads, and tadpoles



by RANDALL TATE, Chief Manager
Reprinted from 5-06 Water Garden News

There are several types of frogs that may inhabit our ponds. Some frogs being aquatic will live a large portion of their lives in the pond while others will live nearby using the pond for breeding and for the food that it offers. Toads will also take up residence near a pond for the same reasons. Frogs and toads eat a lot of insects including mosquitoes. Their offspring, tadpoles, initially eat algae and as they grow they add insects to their diet. Some of these amphibians breed only in the spring while others will lay eggs several times throughout the year.

Frog Or toad?

"What's the difference between a frog and a toad?" you may ask. Toads are dry and have warts. Frogs are wet to the touch and have smooth skin. Toads hop as they have short hind legs. Frogs have long hind legs and jump. Toads do not have teeth but frogs have tiny teeth. Toads lay eggs in long strands while frogs lay eggs in clumps or large globs. These eggs are enclosed in a jelly like substance.

Some people are concerned when they first see the large mass of eggs in the pond. After they hatch you may have hundreds of tadpoles in the pond. At this point we get a phone call asking, "what am I going to do with so many frogs, my pond will not support this many." There is no need to worry. A lot of the tadpoles will never make it. If the tadpoles are toads then they will leave and take up residence elsewhere helping to rid the area of unwanted mosquitoes and other insects. If the tadpoles are frogs they may not be a type of frog that lives in the water. As soon as they mature off they go looking for a home. Some of the frogs that live in water will choose your pond for home and a lot of them will look for new ponds to inhabit.

What's in your pond?

There are a lot of different species of toads and frogs that could be using your pond as a nursery. Depending on where you live in the US you could have American toads, Spadefoot toads, Fowler's toad or others. Common frogs that you are likely to see are Spring Peeper, Gray Tree frog, Green Frog, Leopard Frog, or Bullfrog. The Bullfrog is probably the least desirable species since they tend to dominate the pond eating the other species to extinction. They also will eat some fish. With amphibians being on the decline worldwide your pond may be the best hope of recovery for many species. Amphibians provide a necessary environmental benefit and we can help by providing shady cover and areas of moist mud or mulch for them to use for winter hibernation.



Educational Opportunities

Puddles-N-Pads, Topeka – 785-233-3474

June 10 - 8:30 a.m.	Installing a water garden
June 24 - 10:30 a.m.	Fish 101
June 24 - 12:30 a.m.	Pond Plants
June 24 - 2:30 p.m.	So you're thinking about a pond
June 24 - 3:00 p.m.	Installing a water garden
June 25 - 12:30 p.m.	So you're thinking about a pond
June 25 - 1:00 p.m.	Installing a water garden
June 27 - 6:30 p.m.	Installing a water garden
July 8 - 8:20 a.m.	Installing a water garden
July 31 - 6:30 p.m.	Installing a water garden
Aug. 5 - 8:30 a.m.	Installing a water garden
Aug. 31 - 6:30 p.m.	Installing a water garden
Sept. 9 - 8:30 a.m.	Installing a water garden
Sept. 14 - 6:30 p.m.	Installing a water garden
Sept. 23 - 8:30 a.m.	Installing a water garden
Oct. 5 - 6:30 p.m.	Fall shut down
October 7 - 8:30 a.m.	Fall shut down

Space is limited to 16 people per class so register early.

Waters Edge, Lawrence – 785-841-6777

June 3 - 10:30 a.m.	Rain gardens
June 10 - 10:30 a.m.	Early summer pond care and all about tropical waterlilies
June 17 - 10:30 a.m.	Go native
June 24 - 11:00 a.m.	Lotus – myth & mystique
Aug. 5 - 10:30	Frogs, toads and tadpoles
Sept. 16 - 10:30 a.m.	Getting ready for fall and leaf netting
Oct. 7 - 10:30 a.m.	Bubbling bird baths and fountains
Oct. 7 - 11:30 a.m.	Building a tabletop fountain
Oct. 21 - 10:30 a.m.	Winterizing your garden pond



William Marshal (l) works with his boy scout troop to clean and re-build Anna's Pond. (Photo provided by Dave Meggers.)

Scouts work on Anna's Pond

Ward Meade Park was a busy place on April 22nd because not only were TAWGS volunteers re-potting lilies for the fountain and Anna's Pond, boy scouts from Troup 3 were working to clean and re-build Anna's Pond.

Scout William Marshall chose the project for his Eagle service project. Eight scouts and six adults helped William remove the rocks from the ponds and streambed, re-laid the rocks and cleaned the ponds.

According to Assistant Scout Master Dave Meggers, a scout must complete a total of 21 merit badges and plan a service project and complete it to be rewarded his Eagle.

Thanks to the scouts and their leaders for their hard work! It sure looks better!

Fish Food explained

Reprinted from 4-20-06 Splash

We get lots of requests to recommend a good fish food. There are several points to consider when choosing a food:

- 1) What type of fish are in the pond? Goldfish? Koi? Orfe? A mixture of all of these?
- 2) What is important to you? Fast growth? Spectacular color?
- 3) The health of the fish should always be a top concern
- 4) The impact of the food (and of the fish waste it produces) on the pond

There are many good fish foods on the market, but care should be taken to feed a quality food without too many fillers. Fillers produce a larger amount of fish waste (because they cannot be digested) which in turn makes compost in the pond and feeds algae growth. The money saved by choosing cheaper fish food is then just as easily spent by having to buy more algae control products.

Digestibility is a very important factor. All the larger, brand name fish food manufacturers spend large sums on money to make sure their food contains a balanced nutrition for the pets while taking the health of the pond into consideration.

Foods are available to enhance growth and color as well as the immune system of the fish.

Understanding pond treatments

by Erik Tate

Reprinted from 6-02 Water Garden News

It's a fact of pond keeping that sometimes you may need to use a pond treatment. One of the first and most important things you need to know prior to adding anything to your pond is the pond volume. Unless your pond is a perfect geometric shape with a uniform depth (or you happen to be a mathematician), you will need to use an estimate of average dimensions to calculate the pond volume. The downside to this is it allows a larger margin of error. An exact measurement can be achieved by using a water meter when filling the pond, but these are a little expensive for a one-time use. Perhaps someone in your local pond club has one you could borrow or rent.

There are different kinds of pond treatments:

1. Beneficial Bacteria

Packaged bacteria come in many forms and each is engineered to perform a little different than the next. Some of these convert ammonia to nitrites, then nitrites to nitrate, helping the natural nitrification cycle, while others help to break down sludge found in the pond. They are also used to seed new and existing biological filters. Packaged bacteria are natural and safe for plants and fish. If you are unsure of the exact volume of your pond, it is better to err by add too much rather than not enough of these products to the water.

2. Dechlorinator

Dechlorinators, as the name would hint, are used to remove chlorine and chloramine from tap water. This is a necessity when filling or adding water to a pond using treated city water. Dechlorinators are also safe to err on the side of over-treatment. In fact, I would recommend this, as a problem could occur if the water is under-treated.

3. Algae Treatments

This can be a fairly broad category and is where some mistakes can be made. Many algae treatments are safe for both plants and fish. Others, such as Fountec, are safe for plants but harmful to fish. Some such as Pond Block or Algae Destroyer are safe for fish but will harm many plants. AlgaeFix is a new product that has become very popular. We have received numerous praises for this product. However, we have also heard from two upset customers. They were upset because they did not follow the instructions and consequently killed their fish. One poured the whole bottle in without measuring anything, while the other left his waterfall turned off. While excellent for algae control, AlgaeFix is a chemical and instructions must be followed. It temporarily robs the pond of oxygen, so circulation must be maintained. The use of this product and many other algae treatments should err on the under-treatment side when in doubt.

4. Fish Medications

Another expansive category, we all hope to avoid the use of most of these products. If we maintain a healthy pond and regularly perform water testing, we can prevent many fish health problems and catch others before it is too late. But, there is always the possibility of problems arising. Most fish treatments can be harmful if over-treated. Others like Lymnozyme or MelaFix are much safer. Pond Salt is often used as an antiseptic in ponds. While it would take a lot to hurt your fish, adding too much can affect plant health.

5. Chemistry Adjustments

Products like pH Up and pH Down are often used to get the pH level of the pond to a more desirable level. However, these should be used sparingly, as a sudden change in pH level can be detrimental to fish life. The ideal pH range for goldfish and koi is 6.8 - 7.6, but levels between 6.6 and 8.2 can generally be tolerated without incident. If the pH is not outside of this range, it's usually safer to leave it as is instead of attempting to adjust the levels.

Regardless of what type of treatment you are using and what you are using it for there are two rules that should not be broken:

1. Read and follow all instructions.
2. Measure twice (even the best of us can make an

occasional calculation mistake.)

What's that on the bottom of my pond?

by *Randall Tate*

Reprinted from 6-02 Water Garden News

That, my friend, is what we so affectionately call sludge. Sludge is an accumulation of fish waste, dirt, and partially decayed plant matter. Not only does it look bad but it can also cause problems. The sludge produces gases that can be toxic to fish in high doses. It can harbor parasites and harmful bacteria. It also feeds the algae, making clear water harder to achieve. An ultraviolet sterilizer will give clear water even with sludge but you should still try to get rid of it.

What can I do about it, you ask? You should remove as much as possible. How can this be accomplished? If you have bottom drains installed in your pond, it is easy to keep the sludge removed. If your pond is situated on the upper side of a sloped yard then you may be able to siphon the sludge from the pond. A Pond Mini-Vac will remove a good bit of the sludge especially when using the silt bag option, but a lot of the sludge may get mixed into suspension in the water. A vacuum made for ponds is the easiest and best way to remove sludge. If your pond contains an excessive amount of sludge and you can't siphon or vacuum this out, you may have to do a total cleaning. This is a last resort since a total cleaning upsets the balance of a pond. If you decide to clean the pond keep as much of the existing clean pond water as possible to add back to the pond after it has been cleaned. A temporary tank must be prepared to hold the fish while cleaning. Also the plants must be kept wet and in the shade. Pump all of the water from the pond keeping as much as possible. Use a shop vac or brush and dustpan to remove the solids. **DO NOT USE** any cleaners in the pond; only water or water with a little salt added should be used. After the pond has been cleaned pour or pump the old water back into the pond and place the fish and plants in. Add a dechlorinator and slowly add fresh water to finish filling the pond.

Another method of removing sludge is by the regular use of maintenance bacteria. Biological Clarifier, Clarity Max, GreenEx, Microbe-Lift PI and others contain several types of bacteria and enzymes that will consume the sludge and help reduce the quantity of sludge in the pond. These products also reduce the sludge build up in your filters minimizing the cleaning necessary. Bacteria may not be able to totally eliminate the sludge accumulation but it will make a tremendous difference.

Baby fish



Reprinted from 6-11-01 Splash

How many baby fish hatched in your pond this year? Often the population in a new pond explodes the first year or two, until the natural predators find the pond (frogs, insect larvae, etc.) and help keep things to a manageable level. Baby fish are so tiny when they hatch that it is almost impossible for us to see them until they are a couple of weeks old. They are very good at hiding in the vegetation. This is where they find shelter and sufficient food. They munch on such things as algae and microscopic pond organisms and some pond plants. There is usually no need to worry about feeding the fry until they are big enough to swim fearlessly with the adult fish. Goldfish are generally born black and turn

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

Calendar of Events

June 17-18 – TBA Garden Tour
June 21 – TAWGS monthly meeting
June 24-25 - Topeka Pond Tour
June 24-25 - Lawrence Pond Tour
June 24-25 – Wichita Pond Tour
July 8-9 – Kansas City Pond Tour
July 19 – TAWGS monthly meeting
July 19-25 IWGS Symposium, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
August 16 – TAWGS monthly meeting
September 20 – TAWGS monthly meeting – Lake
Shawnee
October 18 – TAWGS monthly meeting
November 15 – TAWGS Pot Luck Supper

FUN (POND) FACT

Goldfish can live a nice long life if cared for properly! Twelve years is quite common, 20 years possible.... The oldest goldfish reportedly lived in England and lived to be 43 years old.

**Your Dues are Due if your label
reads 4-06, 5-06 or 6-06**

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

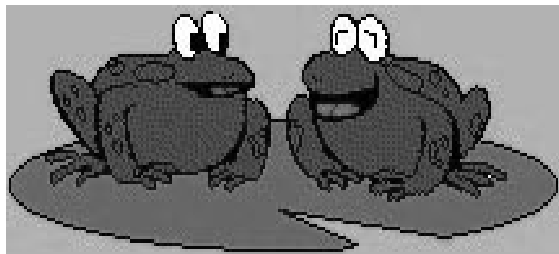
**Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW
Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614**

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

2006 OFFICERS:

Duane Eberhardt Topeka	President 785-246-0240
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 Old Prairie Town (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.tawas.org

The Lily Pad

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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:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor
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We reserve the right to edit input to meet publishing requirements. Copy cannot be returned.