



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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Blooming plants, huge trees, driftwood and a shed with water running off the roof into a pond were features of the display at the 2007 Topeka Lawn and Garden Show. Photo by Bob Saathoff.

Display totally awesome

Wow! Awesome, heavenly, tremendous, remarkable. All are words that we heard to describe the display at the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show Feb. 16-18. The combined efforts of the Shawnee Co. Parks and Recreation Dept., Topeka Beautification Assn., and TAWGS produced a wonderful 2,000 sq. ft. display with numerous huge birch and juniper trees, a 15'x18' rustic cabin with water falling off the roof, a streambed under a bridge cascading into a 22'x20' pond complete with a waterfall, tropical plants and fish, rock and driftwood with fascinating character, a bubbling rock, tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, pansies, primrose, and other blooming plants, bushes and shrubs, and even a skunk, bobcat and raccoon. To see everything you needed to sit a spell in the old lawn chair on the front porch to take in everything.

The County was responsible for building the rustic cabin, hauling in 18 dump truck loads of dirt and supplying many of the beautiful blooming plants. Many thanks to Dave Bartels and his crew for all their hard work. Thanks also goes to Dave for loaning the bridge used over the streambed.

Jolene Grabill (Grabill Garden Visions) from TBA added the edging rocks along the pathways and planted many flowers (donated by TBA and Shawnee Co.) and shrubs and bushes (borrowed from Skinners Garden Store). Jerold Binkley and Bob Saathoff collected rocks

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m. March 21, 2007
Historic Old Prairie Town
 (Ward Meade Park)
Edgings around the water garden
 Jolene Grabill



People loved to walk across or sit on the porch and look at the pond and landscape. They might have even felt a drip of water now and then.

and logs for months to be used in the display and Jerold, Bob and Gerald Hodges tore down an old barn for the wood used in the cabin. Puddles-N-Pads and ABC Ponds loaned pumps, bio filters, and other necessities to build the pond, and P&P loaned rocks and tropical plants for the water garden. The arbor was furnished by Dennis Lowry and some of the driftwood and the roll of barbed wire were furnished by Doug and Marikay Peterman. The stuffed animals were borrowed from Danny Bell Taxidermy.

It is hard to thank everyone who helped with the display but we'll try to mention the ones that we know about that worked during the week to help build the display including: Chairman Bob and Cheryl Saathoff, Floyd and Diane Gruver, Doug and Marikay Peterman, Don Taliaferro, Duane Eberhardt, Gerald Hodges, Jim Green, Dick Rokey, and TBA representatives Jerold Binkley, Jolene Grabill, Bill



Bob and Cheryl Saathoff dressed the part for their shift at the Lawn and Garden Show.

Stumpff and Don Catron. Betty Karnes made numerous phone calls to line up the volunteers that worked shifts during the show including: the Saathoffs, Jim Green, Tom and Helen Platis, Susan and Stanley Wilch, Larry and Barb Shipman, Stan and Mary Bechtold, Earlene and Dale Jirik, Donniss and Gerald Hodges, Susan and Bill Kraus, Duane and Mary Eberhardt, Mary Blubaugh, Carol Gnagy, Michael Bradley, Hi Stockwell, Tom and Georgia Sirridge, Allen and Connie Ellis, Doug and Marikay Peterman and the Gruvers. Workers who helped tear down the display were: the Saathoffs, Hi Stockwell, Michael Bradley, Duane Eberhardt, Dick Rokey, Allen Ellis and the Gruvers. The County employees and TBA representatives Jerold Binkley, Carroll Morgenson and Jolene Grabill also helped dismantle the display. It came apart a lot faster than it went together!!!

Some asked us why we worked so hard on the project knowing that we had to tear it down after the show. Well, let's see, there is the satisfaction of working with two other organizations to build such a beautiful display, the joy of working together and making new friends, the knowledge that we are making the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show a little bit better because of our efforts, it is fun (even if it is hard work) and last, but not



Duane Eberhardt, Jerold Binkley, Carroll Morgenson, Bob Saathoff, Gerald Hodges and Floyd Gruver take a break to look at their work.



Chairman Bob Saathoff visits with Megan and Robin from WIBW AM Radio about the combined efforts of TAWGS, TBA and Shawnee Co. Parks and Rec. to build the 2,000 sq. ft. display.

least, there is the satisfaction of building something that is totally awesome.

Thanks to everyone who had a part in helping make the project a success, with a special thanks to chairman Bob Saathoff. He and his committee are already talking about next year. Robin from WIBW AM radio said on a scale of 1 – 10, the display rated 43.

Let's see if that can be topped!

TAWGS Minutes February 21, 2007

President Duane Eberhardt called the February meeting to order with self introductions. It was good to see some members that have not been there for a while. We had two guests, Lyla Bowser and daughter from Wamego.

President Duane read a letter about Tulip Time that will be April 7 – 18, 2007.

Refreshments were served following a presentation by Jerold Binkley about his proposal of forming a new group called "Friends of the Gardens by the Lake." The refreshments were provided by Mary and Duane Eberhardt and Floyd & Diane Gruver. Duane passed a list around for people to sign up when they would like to furnish refreshments. If you missed the meeting and would like to furnish refreshments please let Duane know. We still need hostesses for several months.

Mary Pat Fischer moved and Jim Green seconded that the minutes be approved as published in the December newsletter. Motion carried.

VP Floyd Gruver reported that the program for the March meeting will be by Jolene Grabill of Grabill Garden Visions. She will talk about landscape edgings around the water garden. The meeting May 16th will be a fish fry/potluck held at The Ensley House at Lake Shawnee with the program centering around the work that has been accomplished at the Ensley Gardens.

Floyd also gave a short report on the display that TAWGS, TBA and Shawnee County built at the recent garden show and thanked everyone that worked on the project. He commented that he appreciated working with Bob Saathoff, chairman of the committee,

who does a great job. Hi Stockwell said, "Bob has increased the attendance at the garden show and the other booths have gotten better. He (Bob) needs to be commended." The group expressed hope that Bob will be willing to chair the committee next year. Bob was not at the meeting but later consented to doing the job again next year.

Secretary/newsletter editor Diane Gruver said that she noticed that the meeting in November falls the night before Thanksgiving and recommended that we change the date to the 2nd Wednesday, Nov. 14th. She has checked with Ward Meade and the meeting room is available that night. Jim Green moved and Betty Karnes seconded that the November meeting be moved to the 14th. Motion carried.

Diane also commented that if anyone would like to receive their newsletter electronically to please let her know. It would save TAWGS about 50 cents per newsletter. Diane also read parts of an e-mail from Galen & Linda Wedel who are founders of a water garden society in Salina. They were very complimentary of our web site and said the display at the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show was tremendous.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that we have \$5,796.70 in the checking account, \$1,178.55 in the savings account for a total of \$6,975.25.

Tom Platis, chairman of the Pond Tour, said that 14 people had met at Classic Bean on the 14th to make plans for this year's pond tour. Present were: Tom and Helen Platis, Donnis and Gerald Hodges, Stan and Mary Ann Bechtold, Connie and Allen Ellis, Floyd and Diane Gruver, Hi Stockwell, Michael Bradley, Duane Eberhardt and Jim Green.

The committee decided to leave the ticket price at \$5 for this year. The ads will remain the same price if paid before May 1st. Color is available at an additional price. Hi Stockwell will do the guide/map again this year. Diane will send letters to the advertisers next week. \$1,000 was budgeted for promotion of the tour, which will include the handouts and posters and radio, TV and newspaper advertising. Diane and Allen Ellis will contact the media about the ads. Floyd will procure 10 – 12 ponds and Donnis will call the volunteers to pond sit. A pond tour application is available on the web site. Hi made over 1,000 very nice colored postcard handouts which were distributed at the Lawn and Garden Show.

Michael Bradley moved and Carol Gnagy seconded that we work with Jerald Binkley on the Friends of the Gardens at the Lake. Motion carried. A list was passed around for people to indicate their interest in working two to four hours a month. A good interest was shown by about 16 people. Since Bob Saathoff has worked with them at Lake Shawnee a lot, we hope that he will consent to being our board representative. (He did.)

Tom Platis moved and Helen Platis seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.

New garden group proposed

Jerald Binkley, the Tulip Guy, told TAWGS members he would like to see a new garden club formed for the sole purpose of working at the Ensley Gardens at

Lake Shawnee. It would be called Friends of the Gardens by the Lake and would consist of volunteers from about six different Topeka garden clubs.

"The reason we need people who are gardeners is because we need people that know the difference between a flower and a weed," Jerald said.

From mid April to mid September the volunteers would work in teams two early-morning hours, three times a week. Right now, the chosen days would be Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. If enough volunteers sign up, it would probably mean that most people would only need to work 2-two hour shifts a month. One person from each club would represent their organization as a board member. Julie Trowbridge from Shawnee Co. Parks and Recreation would be in charge of the group.

The cost to volunteers would be \$10 to join and with that you would get a t-shirt to identify you as a member of the Friends of the Gardens when you are working. Hopefully a banquet could be held at the end of the summer recognizing those who have volunteered.

Jerald's closing remarks were to remind everyone to attend Tulip Time which is April 7 to 18 this year. "Every penny goes to fund that (Ensley) garden," Jerald said.

Volunteers for 2007 Refreshments

| <u>Month</u> | <u>Refreshments</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| March | Carol Gnagy, Donnis Hodges |
| April | Helen Platis, Tom & Georgia Sirridge |
| May | Pot Luck |
| June | Linda Reynolds, |
| July | Hi Stockwell, Michael Bradley, |
| Aug | |
| Sept. | Jon & Mary Pat Fischer, |
| Oct. | Floyd & Diane Gruver, |
| Nov. | Pot Luck |

As you can see, we still need a few volunteers to help. We would like to have two families for each month. Please contact Duane or Diane if you are willing to help out.

Don't drain pond in spring

Reprinted from 2-24-06 Splash

We are definitely not big fans of that! It is very hard work, disturbs and stresses the fish and pretty much destroys the ecology of the Pond!

A Pond that has been well maintained with regular scheduled additions of Beneficial Bacteria and is well aerated should only need to be drained completely every few years.

Spring Clean-Up (getting stringy stuff off waterfalls and growth off rocks) can be accomplished lickety-split with "Green Away" or "D-Solv" and layers of sludge and decomposing leaves and such can be degraded and just about eliminated with "Sludge Away" and/or "Spring/Summer Cleaner".

Definitely preferable to draining and scrubbing, which stresses the fish (not to mention the pond owner)

and destroys the little ecological system that has become an important part of your garden (a lined pond takes at least 2 years to mature and every time it is completely drained that period starts all over again).

Drain and replace about 1/3 of the water to dilute any environmental toxins which may have accumulated during the year because of evaporation and leave it at that!

WATER PLANTS

By Duane Van Dolah

Red Stem Thalia

Thalia geniculata ruminoides

This thalia has leaves that are oval lance-like that can get 30 inches long with attractive red stems. The plant normally grows 5-6 feet tall but can obtain 8 feet in height. It is a tropical or semi-tropical plant that is hardy in zones 9-10. The tall flower stalks have zigzag spikes of small, soft, lavender flowers. These are formed in long stalked, branched panicles 8 inches long, held high above the leaves. In the winter the plant needs to be placed in water in a cool greenhouse with a minimum temperature of 50 degrees in full light. Grow it in a 5-gallon or larger container full of fertile, loamy, soil or in deep humus rich mud in water 1-6 inches over the crown at the edge of a pond. Plant in sun or part shade in a location that is protected from strong winds.

In summer apply an aquatic plant fertilizer monthly. Propagation is by seed, sowed at a temperature of 61-70 degrees in moist propagation soil mix or by division in the spring and summer. If starting from seed, 30-40 percent of the seedlings will show the red stem coloring.

The importance of dividing

by Randall Tate

Reprinted from 3-02 Water Garden News

Some of our readers may still have ice covering their ponds, however the spring thaw is fast approaching. With warmer weather we will soon experience the rebirth of the perennial plants in our pond. New shoots will soon be emerging and this is a good time to rejuvenate your plants. If you have had your water lilies and shallow water plants in the same container for more than a year or two you will want to inspect the container to see if the plant may be pot bound. Water lilies can spend one year in a two-gallon container and maybe two or three in a five to seven gallon container. After this they will need repotting. A pot bound water lily will have numerous shoots coming up from the rhizomes. The rhizome may also be crawling out of the pot looking for a new place to root. When water lilies become pot bound they produce many small leaves. However, they don't produce as many flowers. The reason for this is that after a season of growth you no longer have just one plant in a pot, but rather many much smaller plants. All these plants are competing with each

other for a limited amount of nutrients.

You will want to divide the plant to have one plant per pot. This will maximize your lilies' flowering potential. The extras can be given their own pot or just thrown out. Before dividing your water lily, you should obtain the proper size and type of container. A deep container is not necessary for water lilies; six or seven inches deep should be plenty.

Small water lilies can be potted in a 10" wide container. Medium to large water lilies should be potted in a 14" to 16" wide containers. The best containers to use are plastic no-hole containers or fabric pond pots. We have found that the best growth can be obtained by using fabric pots. A very useful feature of fabric pots is that the depth of the pot can be adjusted to whatever depth your plants require.

Dividing perennial lilies

Begin dividing your perennial water lilies by removing the soil from the water lily using a water hose to expose the rhizomes. Select the best looking piece of rhizome with good growth showing and cut to about three or four inches long. Discard the remainder of the plant. Trim away excess roots and any damaged foliage from the selected piece.

If the water lily is to remain un-potted for any length of time, keep it in the shade with damp paper towels or newspaper covering the plant.

Prepare the container by filling it about three-fourths full with a packaged aquatic planting soil or clay loam if available. Add ten grams of 10-20-10 Aquatic-tabs fertilizer for every gallon of soil. Mound some soil against one side of the container with the rhizome at a 45-degree angle, placing the cut edge against the pot. Add more soil until it is within a couple of inches of the top of the container making sure the growing point of the water lily is above soil level. Firm the soil in place and add about one inch of pea gravel to cover the soil keeping it from covering the growing point of the plant.

Gently add some water to the container and slowly lower the plant into the pond. As long as the weather is warm you will get faster growth by placing the plant just a few inches under the water for the first few weeks.

After this, place the plant at the proper growing depth (12 to 18 inches of water over the top of the plant for most). Remember to fertilize the water lily every month with Aquatic-tabs fertilizer to maintain good growth throughout the season.

Dividing and repotting shallow water plants

Shallow water plants can also become pot bound. Some aquatic plants grow so fast they fill up an average size container in one season. These plants should be repotted each year. If the top of a container is covered with mostly stems or stalks of foliage, with little room for new growth, the plant should be divided. Small plants can be potted in a 10" container. Use a 14" or 16" container for larger plants.

Begin the repotting process by removing the shallow water plant from its container and rinse all the soil and mud from the roots.

For iris, acorus and other plants, which



reproduce on a horizontally growing rhizome, a wide diameter container is best for good growth. Cut the small rooted plants from the main growth and place them on top of a container filled with about 4-5 inches of heavy garden soil or packaged aquatic soil. Place the plant at the edge of the container so it can grow across the pot.

Be sure to fertilize the plant well using 10 grams of fertilizer per gallon of soil.

Cover the rhizome with enough soil to hold it in place then cover the top of the soil with pea gravel. Slowly lower the pot into the water.

For shallow water plants with clumping type roots, such as cattails and rushes, divide the plant by cutting it into sections. Select a section that is approximately one third the diameter of the new pot. Put several inches of heavy garden soil or aquatic soil in a container (diameter is not as critical for this type plant although larger will be better) and place the section to be potted in the center of the pot. Fertilize with 10 grams of fertilizer per gallon of soil. Cover the roots with enough soil to hold the plant in place and then cover with a layer of pea gravel.

When potting tall plants that may be blown over by wind it is a good idea to place a heavy stone in the bottom of the planting container prior to adding the soil or potting medium. This is especially important when using artificial lightweight potting mediums. Fertilize the plants throughout the growing season (about once every month or two with 10 grams of fertilizer per gallon of soil). Flowering plants should be fertilized more often than plants grown just for foliage.

Most aquatic plants will suffer little shock in being transplanted. This is especially true in the springtime when plants will spring forth quickly to produce a wonderful display of greenery and color for the coming season. (Randall Tate is Chief Manager of The Water Garden.)

Editor's note – The new method is to plant water plants directly in the pond using rocks to hold them in place. There are still some of us, however, who prefer to put our plants in pots.

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.

Springtime fish care

Reprinted from 3-03 Water Garden News

This is the time of year when our goldfish and koi are generally under the most stress. When the water temperature is below around 63 degrees, the fish's immune systems are not functioning. The fish have spent several weeks at the bottom of the pond, possibly in debris that may be harboring parasites and harmful bacteria. They have been living on stored fat and are at their weakest at this time.

Spring is typically the worst time for disease outbreaks from gram-negative bacteria. These bacteria can cause several deadly diseases that can be hard to treat. Lymnozyme is a product that creates an environment that is hostile to these disease-causing bacteria and can keep an otherwise contagious disease from spreading. At the very least, it would be advised to keep an eye on your fish this time of year so if there are any problems you can spot them early. This way you can treat with medications or medicated food before the problem is irreversible.

Many people are probably anxious to begin feeding their fish again. You want to make sure you don't start too soon and that you begin with the right food. You can begin feeding a low protein food, such as Pond Care's Spring & Autumn Food, when the water temperature will be consistently above 50 degrees. If a cold snap is in your forecast soon, err on the safe side and do not feed. As the water temperature rises above 60 degrees, you can start back on your regular summer feeding. A note on water temperature: When measuring the water temperature, you should get your reading from mid-water (about halfway down).

