



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.

Volume 10, Issue 4

May 1, 2007



Floyd Gruver (l) and Tom Routh fertilize lilies in the TAWGS pond at Lake Shawnee.

Pond problems discussed

Brad Cheney of ABC Ponds fielded a Q&A Session about problems in and around our ponds at the April meeting.

The session began with Tom Sirridge asking what the life expectancy of a pond liner is since his pond is about 12 years old. Brad said that UV sunrays will shorten the life of the liner but with proper maintenance it should last for twenty or more years.

Bob Saathoff said that his clear water had turned brown the last week and he was wondering what would cause that to happen. Possible causes talked about were: the recent rain, a dirty filter or decomposing plant material.

Algae is a common problem in the spring for just about everyone until plants grow enough to cover part of the pond. Brad said that algae controllers can also kill beneficial bacteria so use them with caution. Don't feed the fish too much, since one of their jobs is to eat the algae in the pond. Also be careful that fertilizer in the landscape does not wash into the pond during rains. One suggestion to clean algae off the waterfall was to stop it long enough to dry it out and then peel the algae off.

Biofalls need to be only cleaned once a year, while skimmers probably should be cleaned once a month, depending on conditions in the pond. Barley is an algae preventor, not a fix. It takes about 20 days for it to start working. There are barley bales, pellets and liquids. Brad's choice seemed to be pellets put between the filter

Monthly Meeting
6:30 p.m. May 16, 2007
Ensley House at Lake Shawnee
East 37th and West Edge Road
Fish Fry/Potluck
Bring Covered Dish
Drinks and table service will be furnished

pads.

Bottom drains were discussed and Kip Walker stated that a bottom drain is almost guaranteed to leak. Koi enthusiasts seem to like the bottom drain because of the excessive waste that koi produce, but for the most part, bottom drains can be troublesome. Another downside is that you will lose the thermo layers with a bottom drain, which will be unhealthy for the fish.

Brad does not necessarily recommend a power wash to clean the sides and rocks in a pond. A garden hose will provide enough force to remove some of the algae. Use a fine net or pond vac to suck up the muck and leaves on the bottom of the pond. It does not hurt to clean the pond in the spring and/or the fall, but a total water replacement is not necessary for many, many years if proper maintenance of the pond is maintained.

Pond plants that are planted directly in the pond do not need to be fertilized as they will receive enough nutrients through fish waste. Again, too much fertilizer in the pond causes the algae to grow.

Tropical plants should not be brought outside until after Mother's Day, Brad said. Cut them back when you bring them outside as the foliage will not be strong enough to stand the wind.

And, last but not least, be mindful of your fish when you clean the pond. Place them in a large container with a pump or air stone to give them plenty of oxygen and put them in the shade.

Thanks Brad for your timely advice.

TAWGS Minutes April 18, 2007

President Duane Eberhardt opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with self introductions. We had several guests: Kip Walker, who later paid his dues,

and new members Brent DeShazer and Brad and Amy Cheney.

Brad's program consisted of answering questions from the group about problems with their water gardens. It was an interesting exchange of questions and answers.

Delicious refreshments provided by Tom and Helen Platis and Tom and Georgia Sirridge followed Brad's presentation. Following refreshments door prizes provided by Brad and Amy, ABC Ponds, were given to lucky winners: Ruth Taliaferro and Michael Bradley each won a gallon bottle of Aqua One; Jon Fischer and Georgia Sirridge each won a waterfall light; Tom Platis won a \$25 gift certificate to Puddles-N-Pads. Many thanks to Brad and Amy for donating the door prizes.

Tom Platis moved and Tom Routh seconded that the minutes of the March meeting be approved as printed in the April Lily Pad. Motion carried.

Floyd Gruver reported that the lilies at Ward Meade did not need to be repotted this year so we wouldn't have any water plants to sell at the Council Plant Sale unless members had extras of their water plants. Don Taliaferro moved and Jim Green seconded that TAWGS not participate in the plant sale this year. Motion carried.

Floyd also reported that he, Diane and Bob Saathoff had met with Ray Schroder, Bill Riphon from the city and Sarah Leith at Ward Meade to discuss the condition of the fountain and metal water feature. Tim Degginger, Degginger's Foundry, said that he would sandblast the fountain, repair it, put an epoxy coating on it, replace the brass tubing with stainless steel and set it back on the concrete pedestal with stainless steel legs for \$750. It will cost about \$50 to buy dye for the water to help reduce algae and obscure the bottom of the fountain and about \$200 to buy PVC pipe and netting for Anna's Pond. Floyd moved that we approve \$750 for the fountain, \$50 for the dye and \$200 for the netting for a total of \$1,000. Michael Bradley seconded the motion which carried.

Floyd asked if any one would be interested in a TAWGS t-shirt if he would get costs and present it at the next meeting. About 20 people indicated an interest in the shirts.

Brad Cheney, Kip Walker, Duane Eberhardt and Hi Stockwell responded to a plea for volunteers to help keep the fountain maintained during the summer months. Thanks everyone!

Treasurer Jim Green reported that we have \$6,290.79 in the checking account and \$2,182.84 in the savings account for a total of \$7,473.63. He also reported that we have received \$575 in advance for ads that will be in the Pond Tour Guide.

Bob Saathoff reported that several TAWGS members have been meeting at Lake Shawnee on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to work in the Garden by the Lake. April was the month that TAWGS was assigned to work but anyone can work during the months of May and June if they want to.

Tom Platis reported that the Pond Tour Committee met a couple weeks ago and everything is on schedule. Hi Stockwell reported that posters have been delivered to area nurseries and eating places on Kansas Ave. He encouraged everyone to take an extra poster if

they know if a place to post them. Diane said that she has made lots of follow up phone calls to advertisers she sent letters to but hasn't heard back from most of them. Floyd is still working on ponds – he wants to have at least 10.

Before adjourning, Kip Walker told the group of a tip that he had recently heard about how to keep snakes away from the pond. Put lava rock around the perimeter of the pond and the snakes will not crawl over the rough rock. Mary Pat Fischer reminded everyone that a fishing line around the pond will help keep blue herons away.

The May meeting will be a fish fry at the Ensley house at Lake Shawnee. Bob Saathoff will cook the fish and everyone else is asked to bring a covered dish. Table service and drinks will be provided. Lake Shawnee employees that worked on the Lawn and Garden Show and TBA representatives will be invited. A tour of the gardens will follow the dinner.

Meeting adjourned.



TAWGS volunteers work in a rose bed at Lake Shawnee. From left Pat Routh, Duane Massey (not a TAWGS member) Floyd Gruver, Tom Platis and Tom Routh.

Friends of the Garden trim roses, pull weeds, haul dirt

Several TAWGS members have been working on Tuesdays and Thursdays during April at Lake Shawnee to help in the gardens by the lake.

Since Floyd and I missed a few times because we were out of town I might miss somebody, but as far as I know these people have worked at least one morning, and most several mornings, during April: Jim Green, Dick Rokey, Hi Stockwell, Tom Platis, Bob and Cheryl Saathoff, Duane and Mary Eberhardt, Tom and Pat Routh and Floyd and I. Julie Trowbridge from Lake Shawnee expressed her thanks for the great participation from our group. Thanks so much to everyone, and if I missed anyone, I do apologize.

Although TAWGS was only obligated to work in April, anyone that would like to work during the next few months is welcome to go out and lend a hand. I'm sure that Julie would welcome your help any morning.

Spinach dip recipe shared

Several members asked Georgia Sirridge for the recipe for her spinach dip that she served at the April meeting. Thanks for sharing, Georgia!

Spinach Dip

- 2/3 pkg. Knorr's Leek Soup Mix (about 1/2 cup)
 - 1 pkg. Italian Dressing
 - 1 C Sour Cream
 - 1 C Mayonnaise
 - 1 pkg Frozen Chopped Spinach (defrost and squeeze well)
 - 1/4 c. Green Onions
- Make the day before and enjoy. Good with chips or vegetables.

Volunteers for 2007 Refreshments

Month	Refreshments
May	Pot Luck
June	Linda Reynolds, Stan & Mary Bechtold
July	Hi Stockwell, Michael Bradley,)could use one more)
Aug	Don & Sandy Regier, Tom & Pat Routh
Sept.	Jon & Mary Pat Fischer, Doug & Marikay Peterman
Oct.	Floyd & Diane Gruver, Betty Karnes
Nov.	Pot Luck

WATER PLANTS

By *Duane Van Dolah*
Sweet Potato Vine

Ipomoea

Ok, so you think I've got my plants switched around. But I use this plant to spiff up my waterfall. Here's what I do, take a pair of ladies panty hose and cut the toes out of them. But a word of warning to the men. Be sure that you get the right hose. I was shown which drawer had the hose I could use but in my haste I went to the wrong drawer. How was I to know that a lady keeps hose separate according to where the holes are in them? With the toes cut out she could still wear them with sandals you'd think. Geez!! Anyway, dump the potato vine out of its 4-inch pot and stick it all in the hose. Tie the top to keep the soil in place. I put my vine at the top of my waterfall, where the water pools before it comes over the falls. The water is about 1 inch over the plant and a rock is placed over it. This keeps the plant from floating away. The only maintenance is cutting



the roots that start hanging down through the water. The potato vine hanging down is really nice and adds color to your falls.

Sweet potato vine is an annual that likes full sun or part sun. Cultivars are 'Ace of Spades', a dark purple with 2'-4' feet spread, 'Blackie', a dark green-purple with 2'-6' spread, 'Marguerite', bright lime green with 2'-6' feet spread, 'Sweet Caroline Bewitched', a dark bronzy purple with 2'-3' spread, 'Sweet Caroline Bronze', the new leaves are lime green turning to rich bronze, 'Sweet Caroline Light Green', a bright lime green to yellow with 2'-3' spread, 'Sweet Caroline Purple', rich purple with 2'-3' spread, 'Sweet Caroline Red', a deep maroon- red to bronze red with 2'-3' spread, 'Tricolor', mint green and white with a violet-pink blush with 2'-4' spread.

Remember to try something a little different for new color to your pond.

Educational opportunities Puddles-N-Pads 2007 Seminars

Call 785-233-3474 for more information

May 19	8:30 am	Pond installation
June 23-24	9 am-5 pm	Pond Tour
Sept. 15	8:30 am	Pond installation
Oct. 13	8:30 am	Winterizing your pond
Oct. 18	6:30 pm	Winterizing your pond

Waters Edge 2007 Class Schedule

Call 785-841-6777 for more information
 Or check website at www.watersedge.com

May 5	10:30 am	Put a Gurgle in Your Garden
May 5	11:30 am	Adding Aquatics to the Perennial Garden
May 12	10:30 am	Smart Ponds - the Truth about Filtration
May 19	10:30 am	Going "Pondless"
June 2	10:30 am	Native Plants and Rain Gardens
June 9	10:30 am	Early Summer Pond Care & All About Tropical Waterlilies
June 16	10:30 am	Smart Ponds - The Truth about Filtration
June 23	11:00 am - 1:00ish	Lotus: Myth & Mystique, Stop and Eat the Lotus - Come to our annual Lotus Party & celebrate the wonders of the Lotus! We'll have Lotus treats & other edible aquatics to sample!!
Aug. 4	10:30 am	Frogs, Toads and Tadpoles
Sept. 22	10:30 am	Getting Ready for Fall & Leaf Netting
Oct. 6	10:30 am	Bubbling Bird Baths and Fountains
Oct. 20	10:30 am	Winterizing Your Garden Pond

Pond Automation

By Brent DeShazer

Last fall I wrote an article mentioning some of the projects I've created to use technology to help better manage my pond. This article describes the first of these projects, automatically turning my waterfall pump off for about an hour each day to help cut down on the amount of algae growing on my waterfall.

Because my small 8x14 pond is in a location near the front of my house that gets quite a bit of sun each day, I tend to get nasty string-algae growing on my waterfall rocks. My grandfather, who first got me started with an interest in ponds, suggested that I unplug my pump for a bit each day when the sun is hitting the rocks and that will help dry out and kill the algae.

As I work full time it wasn't possible for me to manually turn the pump on and off each day, I needed something that could turn it off and then back on automatically for me. I thought about a simple plug-in outlet timer that traditionally get used for holiday lights, but felt that would be pretty limiting and I had bigger plans to integrate this into my already extensive home-automation system.

I use devices that follow a protocol called X10 for automating lights and appliances around my house. X10 relies on two types of devices to operate, modules and controllers. You plug your device that you want to control



into a module and then the module either plugs in to your wall outlet or is wired in as a replacement outlet, depending on the module. The module is then set to one of 256 possible addresses that uniquely identify that device to

your controllers. There are modules designed to specifically control lights and lamps, called lamp modules, and there are modules to control "everything else", called appliance modules. The difference is that lamp modules can be dimmed, while appliances can only be turned on or off.

Once you have your module(s) plugged in and configured, you use a controller device to turn the modules on or off. There are various types of controllers, some of which look like alarm clocks and have timing capabilities, some are simple wireless remotes, and some even connect to your computer and allow you to operate your devices from behind your keyboard!

So I started looking for a compatible solution for my pump control, but first I needed to find out how much power my pump was using. I wanted to make sure whatever device I used to control the pump wouldn't burn out!

A couple years ago I purchased a device called a Kill A Watt power meter online from ambientweather.com for about \$25. This is a simple device that you plug into a wall outlet and then plug another device like say, a pond pump, into the Kill A Watt, and it will give you a readout of how much amperage, voltage or total power the device is drawing. A quick check with this device showed that my AquaSurge 2500 gph pump was pulling 1.3 amps, for about 110 watts of power.

There are several styles of plug-in control

modules made by companies like Radio Shack, Leviton and X10 that are compatible with the X10 control protocol. My experience with the plug-in appliance modules is that even if you don't exceed their ratings they will often quit working after extended use. Because of that, I decided to use a heavier-duty wired-in module that would replace the power outlet that my pump was currently plugged in to. I chose the 15-amp Leviton 6280, available from smarthome.com for about \$27. This was more than enough to handle my pump, and had a much better reputation for not failing than the \$19 plug-in modules.

Because I wanted a controller that could turn the device off and on on a schedule, I chose the X10 Mini Timer for \$33.99, also from smarthome.com. This is a simple plug-in controller that offers four separate timers with two schedules per day each.



Installing my controlled outlet was just like replacing any other outlet, but if you're not experienced working with electricity then you should have it installed by a licensed electrician. The only thing you have to do is use a small flat-head screwdriver to set your address on the front of the outlet/ You choose a letter between A-P called the House Code (red dial on the Leviton) and a number between 1- 16 called the Unit Code (black dial on the Leviton). Actually, because of the controller we're using, your unit code needs to be between 1-8. Just turn the dials with the screwdriver and remember what you set them at. I'll use an example of House Code C, Unit Code 1.

Once the new wall outlet was wired in and the pump plugged in it was time to set up the controller. You simply plug the controller into an available wall outlet somewhere in your house and set the house-code dial on it to match what the outlet module was set to, in this example it would be House Code C.

There are four on-off buttons on the top of the controller that allow you to manually turn your devices on and off. You should be able to control the pump now by pressing the "1" button up for on or down for off. It is a good idea to check this for proper operation before proceeding.

I won't detail the rest of the controller programming here as it is well documented in the manual, but in short you simply set the controller time to match the current time exactly like you would a digital clock, and then follow the instructions for setting the time(s) you want Unit 1 to turn off and then on. Because I get fairly full sun in early afternoon on my waterfall, I have the pump turn off at 2:00 p.m. and then back on at 3:00 p.m.

While this simple and relatively inexpensive example will work well for most people, in actuality my system is much more complex. My real controller is connected to a computer, and it uses current weather conditions from my weather station such as

temperature, recent rainfall and amount of sun to determine whether to actually shut the pump off each day. It also automatically adjusts for daylight savings time and the gradual shift of daylight hours to determine the actual time to turn off and on.

Just this regular off-and-on routine has helped to drastically reduce the amount of algae I get on my waterfall. As a bonus, with the controller used for the example, you could add up to three more modules for controlling lights, lamps and other appliances either manually or on separate schedules.

For questions about this article, feel free to e-mail me at brent@deshazer.net.

I dedicate this series of articles to my grandfather, David DeLong, who got me started with my pond and gave me lots of great advice. Thanks, Grandpa!

Algae, algae, algae

Reprinted from 3-10-07 Splash

There are many different kinds of algae, but there are two basic groups that are the pond keepers enemy: "Pea soup algae." the stuff that makes the water green, sometimes to the point that the fish cannot be seen and "string algae," also called "blanket weed". It covers everything from pond plants to rocks to waterfalls.

"Pea soup" algae is a plant that is aided by favorable conditions in the pond: nutrients from organic waste, sunshine and water. A good beneficial bacterial product like Microbe Lift used in conjunction with a flocculant (Accu-Clear) can help the filter gain control.

The pH should be tested before treating the pond to make sure that conditions are favorable for the natural bacteria to do their job. "String algae" or "blanket weed" is often a sign that the pH in the pond is too high. Lowering the pH and treating existing algae with "Pond Balance" will improve the pond's appearance in a short time. The only mechanical device that will keep "pea soup" algae out of your pond is an Ultra-Violet Clarifier. These devices work in conjunction with your filter to keep the water clear.

Fish, fish, and more fish

*by Randall Tate, The Water Garden Chief Manager
Reprinted from 5-02 Water Garden News*

As your pond water warms, your goldfish and koi will become active looking for food. Soon after you notice them browsing for food and the water temperature has risen to around 60 degrees, you will see them grouping together and several fish will chase another. As the water continues to warm to near 70 degrees you may notice your fish spawning. Usually spawning begins early in the morning and may continue until around noon.

Goldfish may spawn throughout the summer depending on water temperature and other factors. Koi usually only spawn once a year and this may be a month or more after goldfish begin to spawn. The spawning activity may become quite violent with one fish actually pushing another out of the pond. Koi

especially may become damaged with scales being knocked off and there may even be bruising.

Koi and goldfish lay many thousand eggs. The female looks for a secure place to lay her eggs. Most often this being floating or submerged vegetation that has growth near the surface. As soon as the eggs are deposited the fish will begin eating them. If your vegetation is thick many of the eggs will survive and hatch.

The fry will emerge from the eggs in about 3 - 7 days depending on the water temperature. When first hatched, the fry are less than 1/4 inch long. They will still have their yolk attached and this will be their food for the first few days. After the yolk is gone, microscopic organisms will become their food source. The fry can move about some but not really swim for the first few days. They may be seen lying about the plants or hanging on the sides of the pond.

Most goldfish fry will become dark almost black in color and may remain that way for several weeks or months. This is a natural defense to help avoid predators. Their natural color will gradually come in. Koi begin showing their colors much sooner. All goldfish can and will interbreed. If you have several types of goldfish you will find all sorts of colors and body shapes from a spawning.

The growth rate will depend on many factors: water temperature, the amount of available food, and number of other fish in the pond. With sufficient cover in the pond, you should have several fry reach maturity. This process is very interesting to watch but you may soon find that you have more fish than your pond will support.

If this happens, you may want to build more ponds to make room for these new arrivals but eventually you will have the problem of getting rid of excess fish. There are several ways to accomplish this. You can give some away; you can release some in a willing friend's farm pond (as long as this pond does not overflow into a stream or other natural body of water) where they are likely to be eaten by predator fish. You may choose to euthanize them. The best method is to place the fish in a plastic bag of water with a little salt and place them in the freezer. The fish will gradually go to sleep and then be killed by the freezing temperatures.

PLEASE NOTE: Under no circumstances should you release non-native fish in natural bodies of water such as streams, lakes, or rivers.

Thank you-Thank you

Many thanks to Pat and Tom Routh who donated two water plants, an iris and cat tail, for the TAWGS pond at Lake Shawnee. They donated a lotus and some other marginals last year too. Thanks so much!

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

Calendar of Events

May 16 – TAWGS Monthly Meeting Fish Fry/Potluck
at Lake Shawnee, 6:30 p.m.
June 20 – TAWGS Monthly Meeting
June 23-24 -Topeka Pond Tour
June 23-24 – Lawrence Pond Tour
July 7-8 – Wichita Pond Tour
July 14-15 – Kansas City Pond Tour
July 18 – TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Aug. 15 – TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 19 – TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 17 – TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov 14 – TAWGS Pot Luck & Monthly Meeting

(Note change of date)

Fun pond fact

Impatiens grow great if stuck between the rocks around the pond with just their roots in the pond water. The roots do have to be covered with water at all times!

Your Dues are Due if your label reads 3-07, 407 or 5-07

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

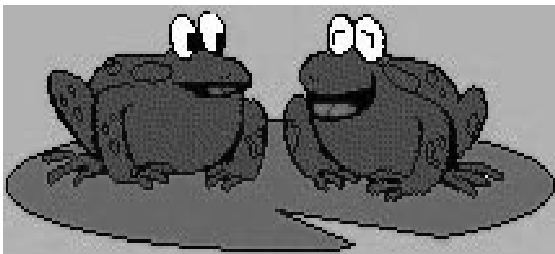
Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

2007 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

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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.