



# *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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**Doug Grimm (standing center) talks with (l - r) Phil Thompson and Bob Saathoff. Jeryl Grimm (seated center) visits with TAWGS members. Photo by Jim Green.**

## **Grimm talks about trees, ponds and plants**

*By Diane Gruver*

Doug Grimm of Grimm's Gardens in Hiawatha gave a very interesting talk on trees, ponds and flowers at our April TAWGS meeting. Doug is a Master Gardener and a certified arborist. He also participates in the Kansas Record Tree Program. That means that he gets to go around the state of Kansas and measure the state champion trees, which he finds very interesting.

Doug and his wife, Jeryl, have been farming in northeast Kansas for 30 years. In 1994 they started Grimm's Gardens with a single greenhouse for fruits, flowers, berries and more. They raised tomatoes and blue berries the first year.

"Now we have five greenhouses and we don't raise tomatoes anymore," Doug said.

Doug said they told him he couldn't raise blueberries in northeast Kansas, but he planted 2,000 plants in 1994. "I put my heart into it," he said. "It worked!" He planted 24 rows, each 150 feet long. He filled a trench full of bark and sawdust and treated it with sulfur. "It is the soil here that makes it difficult," he said

"Blueberries don't have tap roots," he said. "They have a fibrous root which needs to be able to spread." Blueberries have become a popular food, touting many

### **Monthly Meeting**

**7:00 p.m., Wed., May 20, 2009**

**Historic Old Prairie Town**

(Formerly Ward Meade Park)

**Lighting and Pumps – New Technology**

**Eric Wood**

health benefits. Now, they allow the public to come pick blueberries which they sell by the pound. They also grow blackberries, raspberries, peaches and apples.

Kurt Grimm, the oldest of the Grimm's five sons who work in the business, is in charge of the landscape part of the business, which was started in 1999. "When Kurt first started landscaping he wouldn't do a landscape without a water garden," Doug said. In addition to several beautiful water gardens in the Hiawatha area, they have also done some work at the Omaha Zoo.

Doug said they seldom use limestone in their water gardens but use mostly Colorado and Minnesota rock. They use wetland filtration systems, where the water comes off the bottom and goes up through the plants.

Moving on to trees, Doug said that trees can add up to 18% to a homeowner's property value and properly placed, can reduce air conditioning costs by 30%. Doug works actively in tree propagation and is continually working to develop new trees that are hardy to the climate extremes that we experience in the Midwest and provide years of pleasure and beauty. As you probably already know, Hiawatha is known for its beautiful sugar maples that have such beautiful fall foliage. Two trees that give especially good fall color are Pony Express and Oregon Trail. The Oregon Trail maple also withstood the ice storm a couple years ago with fewer broken branches.

Among the many annuals and perennials in their greenhouses, Grimm's also has a huge variety of geraniums. They also carry water garden plants, trees and shrubs.

Doug said an interesting tidbit about controlling algae in a water garden was that the juglone in walnuts is toxic to algae. They have

experimented with this and found that one nut per 10 gallons of water seems to work well. Asked what plants work well in bog filters, Doug said that cat tails are very effective but they tend to crowd out other plants. Other good plant filters are rush, iris, lizard tail and pickerel.

Grimm's Gardens is located 6½ miles north of highway 36 on Goldfinch Road (half way between Fairview and Hiawatha). Their website is [www.grimmsgardens.com](http://www.grimmsgardens.com).

## TAWGS 4-15-09 Minutes

President Duane Eberhardt called the meeting to order with self introductions. The meeting was held at Snyder's Cabin in Gage Park since Tulip Time was being held at Historic Old Prairie Town.

Bob Saathoff introduced the speaker, Doug Grimm, from Hiawatha, who gave a very interesting talk. Following the program, Hi Stockwell and Michael Bradley served delicious refreshments.

Hi Stockwell moved and Phil Thompson seconded that the minutes of the March 18 meeting be approved as printed in the Lily Pad. Motion carried. Secretary Diane Gruver thanked Colleen Hampton for recording the minutes in March, and Amy Thompson for recording the minutes in November and February. She said she thought it was time for someone else to be secretary next year because of her being gone so many months. Hopefully somebody will step forward for that office next year. Diane agreed to continue doing the newsletter unless someone else would like to take that job over too.

Treasurer Jim Green gave the treasurer's report. He reported that we have \$2,061.03 in the checking account and \$1,229.34 in the savings account for a total of \$3,290.37. Of that amount, \$1,547.15 is reserved for various projects, leaving us \$1,743.22 in equity. Jim reported that we have \$144.19 showing as a liability for the project done at Ward Meade, but he felt the project is completed. Michael moved and Mark Weaver seconded that we put the \$144.19 back into equity. Motion carried.

Jim said that a new member paid her dues, Sharon Sanders. Welcome.

Hi moved and Floyd Gruver seconded to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried.

There was no old or new business.

Phil Thompson reported on progress of the pond tour. He said he had contacted the advertisers in last year's guide and only one has said no so far. A couple businesses have closed. He is trying to pick up a few new advertisers for this year.

Tom Platis, Floyd Gruver and Hi Stockwell will go look at the ponds that have been submitted for the tour.

Bob Saathoff reported that he, Allen Ellis, Duane Eberhardt and two people from TBA had planted rocks at Lake Shawnee the previous week. He reminded us that May is the month for TAWGS members to volunteer at Lake Shawnee, 8 – 11, on Tuesday and Thursdays. Bob also suggested that maybe our project

for this year, or next, would be to build a stream bed connecting the pondless waterfall to Anna's pond in Ward Meade Park.

Hi moved and Jim Green seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.



*The fountain wasn't running, but the tulips were beautiful at Tulip Time at Old Prairie Town.*



*Beautiful tulips at Lake Shawnee during Tulip Time.*

## Water Plants

*by Duane Van Dolah*

### Angel Trumpet

*Datura ceratocaula*



I've always been fascinated with the Moon Flower, Angel Trumpet plant, Thorn Apple, Brugmansia family of plants. I grow both Daturas and Brugmansias, so I ordered a book that was printed in German first and is now in English. Wanting to learn more on these plants, this book really helped.

For instance, what do you know! There is an aquatic Datura. The Datura ceratocaula is an annual from Mexico. It grows in shallow water of about 6 inches deep or swampy conditions. The plant loves heat and full sun. Its hollow, gray-green stems reach 12-36 inches long and has toothed, oval, wavy leaves with short white hairs underneath. The large, sweet



smelling flowers reach 7 inches and appear from June till September. These are broad, funnel-shaped petals with distinct 10-point peaks on the petals' outside edges. Color is white to violet-pink on the inside and the outer side is bluish. Flowers open from mid-day to the next morning. Unlike most Daturas, the seedpod is not spiked but dangles like a small inverted egg. It is rather sparse in growth since it doesn't fork along the stem too often. So planting should be done in mass or combined with floaters such as Water Hyacinths. The seeds and plants are available on the Internet. The most often used method of propagation is saving the seeds after the seedpod dries and breaks open. It must be treated as an annual. These plants are highly toxic and care must be used when they are grown. Shamans and medicine men have used their hallucinogen powers for centuries but too much will kill. In Mazatlan, Mexico, meat from ducks was known to be poisonous certain times of the year. The people eating the meat felt like they were drugged or poisoned. The ducks in the fall would eat the leaves and seeds, and the toxins would stay temporarily in the duck's meat and was very dangerous to humans.

## Refreshments for 2009

May – Don & Sandy Regier

June – Fish Fry - Connie & Allen Ellis, Bob and Cheryl Saathoff and Don and Ruth Taliaferro

July – Amy & Phil Thompson

August – Floyd and Diane Gruver

We still need hosts for September and October. Call Duane 785-246-0240 if you can help out.

## Think rain gardens this spring

*Reprinted from the March 2009 Delaware River WRAPSheet*

Rain gardens not only beautify your yard, they also benefit your watershed and community.

Rain gardens are shallow depressions that collect rainwater as it runs off rooftops, driveways, parking lots or other impermeable surfaces. They are designed to hold rain for a short time, allowing the water to filter into the ground. Rain gardens are sometimes called "downspout gardens" because they are often located beneath downspouts.

Rain gardens not only beautify your yard, they also benefit your watershed and community. Compared to a conventional patch of lawn, a rain garden can allow 30% more runoff to soak into the ground, making better use of rainfall while reducing stormwater runoff. By increasing the amount of rain that filters into the ground, rain gardens recharge local groundwater supplies, help reduce flooding, protect streams from pollutants, and purify runoff by filtering it through the soil. They also provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

Native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs that can tolerate short periods of standing water are ideally suited for use in rain gardens. Once established, many native plants develop deep roots that enable them to also tolerate summer droughts and break up clay soils, further improving water infiltration. Many nurseries stock a variety of native plants, or they can be ordered

from catalogs or on the Internet.

Spring is here! Why not consider planting a beautifully functional rain garden? To find out how, visit the Delaware River Watershed website, [www.delawareriverwatershed.org](http://www.delawareriverwatershed.org) and click on the "Publications" tab.

## Clean pond with ease

*Parts reprinted from 4-25-09 The PondGuy Blog*

Cleaning and maintaining a beautiful water garden takes time. We've all done it. We've all drained the water garden to try and clean out the pond. We've all fallen in one time or another to try and get those leaves and muck out. So what can you do? Well, if you haven't used a Pond Vacuum yet, I highly recommend it.

"You mean you can actually vacuum your pond"? I've heard that statement many times while talking to some of you on the phone or in person, and fortunately, you can! Having a pond vacuum for your water garden is similar to having a regular vacuum for your home. Think about it. Would you have carpet in your home and NOT have a vacuum? Probably not. This is similar to having a pond vacuum for your water garden. Simply, one doesn't go without the other.

First, let's consider why we need to vacuum our ponds: As time passes by, our ponds accumulate "muck" from leaves, fish waste, uneaten fish food, lily pads, etc. This "muck" is very high in nutrients and a great food source for algae! Although we do suggest a complete cleanout each and every spring, this is sometimes not an option, especially every year. So having the ability to remove waste without removing all the water is a huge advantage. In general, you will only lose about 10-15% of your water after a complete vacuuming, which is just the right amount for a small water change to freshen up the pond.

There are several vacuums on the market. Do your homework and base your decision on how large your pond is and how often you will need to vacuum.



**Bob Saathoff plants rocks in the ravine at Lake Shawnee. It is hard to believe that two years ago the ravine was full of trees, brush and poison ivy. Many hours have been spent by TAWGS and TBA members to make it the beautiful place it is today.**

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

## Calendar of Events

May 20 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
June 17 – Fish Fry & Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
June 27 – 28, 2009 – Topeka Pond Tour  
July 15 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
Aug. 19 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
Sept. 16 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
Oct. 21 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
Nov. 18 – Potluck

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***Need volunteers to work at Lake Shawnee Tuesdays in May, 8 – 11. Meet at covered bridge near restrooms at 37<sup>th</sup> & West Edge Rd. Call Bob Saathoff, 785-640-1482, if you can help.***

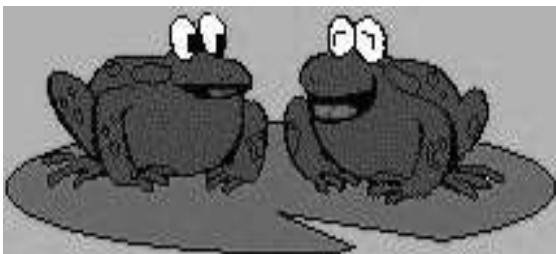
**Your Dues are Due if your label reads anytime in 2008 or 2, 3, 4 or 5-09**  
Please renew as soon as possible to continue receiving the newsletter.  
Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

### THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

#### 2009 OFFICERS:

Duane Eberhardt Topeka	President 785-246-0240
Don Taliaferro Topeka	Vice President 785-272-8348
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.tawgs.org](http://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:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor  
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785 364-3046

[fdgruver@embarqmail.com](mailto:fdgruver@embarqmail.com) (note change)

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