



# 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 12, Issue 9

Oct. 1, 2009



Jerold Binkley thanks the crowd for helping him financially and physically at the Ted Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee.

## Jerold Binkley honored

City and county dignitaries and countless volunteers from Shawnee County garden clubs met at Lake Shawnee Thursday, September 17, for a dedication honoring Jerold Binkley. Following several speeches from dignitaries, City Ambassadors unveiled a bronze statue titled "I'm so Happy." The title came from a quote from Jerold's then three year old granddaughter who said "I'm so happy," when she first saw the Ted Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee nine years ago. The statue features two children – a girl and a boy – crouched on the ground, watching a family of rabbits.

Bob Saathoff, representing TAWGS, told the group that it was a life changing experience when he started gardening with Jerold several years ago. Bob and Jerold have spent many hours the last several years gathering rocks from the Gilbert Capoune CX Ranch near Alma and planting the rocks and plant material in the many gardens at the lake. "There is no limit to what we can accomplish by working together," Bob said, indicating the countless hours spent by many volunteers from the garden clubs.

An endowment with a goal of \$1 million has been set up to maintain the gardens for future generations.

"We need your help physically and financially," Jerold said. "It takes a village to take care of a garden."

**Monthly Meeting**  
7:00 p.m., Wed., Oct. 21, 2009  
Historic Old Prairie Town  
**To be announced**



A rain garden looks much like a perennial flower bed but is designed to capture runoff water to percolate into the soil before draining into streams and lakes.

## Self sustaining rain gardens and rain harvesting

Eric Wood gave a very interesting talk on a topic that is becoming more and more popular as storm water management becomes a more important issue. The idea of a rain garden is to slow down the water enough to drop the impurities and debris in it so that water entering streams and waterways is cleaner.

A rain garden is not a water garden or a bog garden. It is designed for water retention for a short period of time (24 hours) so the water has a chance to percolate into the soil leaving impurities along the way and allowing cleaner water to drain out on the lower end. Sustainable rain gardens are designed to be wet today and 100% dry tomorrow. In a half inch rain, 312 gallons of water can be captured from a 500 sq. ft. roof. In a one inch rain, 9'x19' rain gardens can capture 49,000 gallons of water from 150 homes. That is 49,000 gallons of water that will not go into the storm water system.

Building a rain garden is not difficult. Select a place where the rain water will pool from rain gutters or

gullies. The shape of the garden should be somewhat like a bowl, with a deeper center and an area where runoff can escape during a heavy rain. Till the soil to 8 to 12 inches deep and amend it with organic matter such as leaves or compost. If the soil is hard clay you can even add coarse sand. Diatomaceous earth is also recommended to help break up the soil to make it more porous. The goal is to amend the soil enough so that water will percolate into the ground and not stand in the area for more than 24 hours. Use plants that are both drought tolerant and moisture tolerant, some with deep roots and some with shallow roots. Perennials, native plants and grasses will work fine. Lists of recommended plants can be found on the internet.

Rain harvesting is designed to store water for future watering of gardens, etc. Rain barrels can be set under drain spouts, but it works best when you have leaf guards on the gutters because the water needs to be debris free. A 1,000 gallon water storage system will provide one inch of water for 8 weeks. The systems that Eric sells are equipped with a pump which gives pressure for a hose. A rain barrel needs to be plumbed away from the house and designed with an overflow for heavy rains. A large underground storage tank can be put under grass or permeable pavers. As with a rain garden, do not let the water pool close to the foundation of the house or you may end up with water in the basement. A large storage system needs to have circulation (bubbler, aerator, etc.) to oxygenate the water. Eric said the cost is not cheap – a 1,500 gallon rain harvest system can cost between \$7,000 and \$10,000.

As the purity of our lakes and streams become a bigger and bigger issue, rain gardens and rain harvesting will become more and more important. Eric said that there are three federal government entities dealing with water purity: FEMA, EPA and the FDA. This makes it more difficult to comply with their many regulations.

Eric works for Complete Aquatics, a wholesale supplier for water gardens and lake management. They also deal with storm water retention and water purity.

*Editor's note: Floyd and I have installed two 50 gallon rain barrels (cost about \$50 per barrel) under a couple of our drain spouts and it takes only a 1/2 inch rain to fill each barrel. We are a part of a group in Holton, Holtonians 4 Stormwater Solutions, that is working to improve storm water run-off with rain barrels and rain gardens. We have received a state grant to help pay for the rain barrels and rain gardens as well as public education about them. We have also gotten a federal grant to build a large bio retention cell at the top basin of the storm water source to slow down and purify the water before it enters a creek below which drains into the Delaware River.*

## TAWGS Minutes 9-16-09

Secretary Diane Gruver called the September meeting to order in the absence of President Duane Eberhardt and Vice President Don Taliaferro.



*Eric Wood (r) explains the proposed plan for a streambed and ponds connecting the pondless waterfall and Anna's pond at Historic Old Prairie Town. Tawgs members are (l-r) Connie Ellis, Kent Hampton, Linda Reynolds, Michael Bradley, Don Regier, Floyd Gruver, Cheryl Saathoff, Allen Ellis and Bob Saathoff.*

The first order of business was a tour of the gardens with Eric Wood and Bob Saathoff to show us what the proposed streambed and ponds would look like. The streambed would begin at the back of the pondless waterfall and wind down towards Anna's Pond. Eric said the first phase of the project would end at the concrete walkway. If approved, the second phase of the project would look like it goes under the walkway and continue down to Anna's pond.

Following the tour, Eric gave an interesting program on Self Sustaining Rain Gardens and Rain Harvesting.

The meeting resumed following refreshments served by Linda Reynolds and Don and Sandy Regier. Diane thanked the Regiers and Linda and announced that Tom and Pat Routh will provide refreshments next month.

Bob Saathoff moved and Mary Weaver seconded that the August minutes be approved as printed in the Sept. Lily Pad. Motion carried. Diane reminded everyone to watch their labels on the newsletter and if it is highlighted in yellow that means that their dues are due.

Diane gave the Treasurer's report in the absence of Jim Green. She said we have \$3,125.98 in checking and \$1,231.86 in savings for a total of \$4,357.84 in the bank. We have \$823.54 committed to projects, leaving us a total of \$3,534.30 of money that we can spend on future projects. Mark Weaver moved and Michael Bradley seconded that the report be approved. Motion carried.

Bob Saathoff gave a report from the nomination committee, consisting of Bob, Don Taliaferro and Tom Routh. The slate of officers presented were: President – Don Taliaferro; Vice President – Bob Saathoff; Secretary – Sandy Regier; and Treasurer – Jim Green. Diane will continue to write the newsletter. Floyd Gruver moved and Linda Reynolds seconded that the slate of officers presented be approved. Motion carried. Officers will officially be elected in October.

Bob Saathoff reported that he and Eric met with Rob Nordyke and Ray Schroeder a few days ago and the proposed project of the streambed and ponds at Ward Meade will need to be done in two phases. He is still waiting for an estimate of the materials needed to complete phase one. He pointed out that we have a \$1,500 credit at

Waterscape Concepts that can be applied toward the estimate. He said that Ray Schroeder said that he would have equipment and manpower to help with the project. Members will need to approve the expenditure at the October meeting and the committee will begin preliminary construction on October 22 with a group workday planned for October 24. Floyd Gruver moved and Pat Routh seconded that we give Bob and the committee tentative approval to proceed with the project. Motion carried.

Diane said that a worksheet was on the sign up table if anyone wanted to volunteer to be ice cream dippers for the Potwin Drug Store.

Sandy Regier said that she had attended a planning meeting for Apple Fest which will be Sunday, October 4. We have enough volunteers signed up and they will receive a letter soon from Ward Meade with details about parking, attire, etc.

Under new business, Diane announced that Phil Thompson has volunteered to be chairman of the 2010 Pond Tour. Thank You Phil!! Michael moved and Mark Weaver seconded that the dates for the tour be set for the last weekend in June, June 26-27. Motion carried.

Eric Wood said that Mrs. Jack Rees died this week and suggested that secretary Diane send a sympathy card from TAWGS. Diane will get the card in the mail soon.

Bob Saathoff said that there will be a dedication of a plaque and bronze statues at Lake Shawnee in honor of Jerold Binkley on Thursday, Sept. 17 at 11:00. He encouraged any TAWGS members that are able to attend the dedication.

Bob also reported that he had talked to Leland Heifner about the Topeka Lawn and Garden Show and Leland said it would be held a week later than usual, Feb. 19 - 21. Bob will not be available that weekend as he has commitments to Ducks Unlimited. He said that Mary Weaver has agreed to chair the project and she will be calling for volunteers soon. Thanks Mary!! A theme has not been selected yet but will probably be something about Garden Smart.

Eric Wood announced that the Boy Scouts are celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> year and there are lots of boys available for service projects. In that same line, Floyd Gruver told about his recent week at the New York Says Thankyou Project at the Little Souix Boy Scout Camp near Owana, IA, where 4 scouts had been killed by a tornado last year. As many as 600 volunteers from New York, Greensburg, New Orleans and other areas of the United States where a tragedy has occurred helped build a chapel, clear trails and generally clean up the camp. It was a wonderful experience, he said. If you want to see an ABC Video of the project, go to <http://abcnews.go.com/video/playerIndex?id=8552720>.

After you wade through an advertisement, hopefully, you can see what the New York Says Thankyou Project is all about.

Meeting adjourned.

## Start getting ready for winter

*Parts taken from 9-05-09 The Pond Guy*

It's almost time to prepare your plants for winter. Each type of aquatic plant needs to be cared for in a different way, but the most important factor to remember is that the roots of your plants must not come into contact with ice or freezing temperatures. If they do, they simply

won't survive. Keeping in mind regional variances, here's how to keep your aquatic plants healthy, happy and ready to bloom again next spring:

1. First, remove any dead leaves from the plants growing around your pond. Give bog plants, like irises and taro, a good inspection and clip off any unhealthy growth, spent leaves or blooms. You want your plants to go into winter as healthy as possible so they emerge strong and stout in the spring.
2. Next, pull on your waders and tend to your hardy water lilies. Pull them out of your pond and trim them to about 3 inches above the root system. When you're done, move the pots or baskets to 18 inches deep or lower, where they'll be warm and safe from winter frost.
3. If you have tropical and floating aquatic plants, like tropical lilies or lotus, it's easiest to treat them as annuals: Remove them from your pond and mulch the soil and root balls. In most climates, they won't survive the cold winter conditions. You can try to overwinter them in your shed or garage, but it can be difficult, as many of the tropical varieties require temperatures above 60 degrees Fahrenheit and strong light to survive.
4. Treat floating aquatic plants, like water hyacinth and lettuce, as annuals, too. Fortunately, they're relatively inexpensive to replace year after year.
5. For hardy lotus, trim back the foliage after they have gone dormant and turned brown. Don't trim them while the plant and leaves are still green, as it can cause it to be susceptible to diseases that creep in through the hollow stems. Move the plants to the bottom of your pond, along with your water lilies. Depending on the size of your pond and the number of plants you have, this winterizing chore shouldn't take longer than an afternoon, but you'll be rewarded in the spring with healthy growth that will once again beautify your outdoor living space!

## Moisture loving plants

by Duane Van Dolah  
*Turtlehead*



*Chelone*

This family of plants goes by the names, Shell Flower and Snake Head besides Turtle Head. The shape of the flower in the different species determines the name. All the plants have dark green, heavily, veined leaves with serrated edges on stiff, upright stems. This North American native grows in the wild in moist woodlands, prairies, and mountains. Short 2- 3 feet stems produce dense spikes of flowers at the terminal and branch tips. The flowers are white, pink and purple and are inflated, tubular shaped flowers with two lips, with a beard on the inside of each lower lip. The Turtle Head blooms when most plants are done with their blooming for the season. It is late summer and autumn.

Continued on page 4

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

## Calendar of Events

Oct. 4 – Apple Fest  
Oct. 21 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting  
Oct. 24 – Build streambed at Ward Meade  
Nov. 18 – Potluck

### 2010

Feb. 19-21 – Topeka Lawn and Garden Show  
June 26-27 – Topeka Pond Tour

## Turtlehead continued

All are hardy to zone 5 and grow in sun and part shade. The more moist the soil the more sun it can take. They can grow in heavy clay and but also will grow in bog or swampy conditions and even dry soil. 'Chelone lyonii' has a height of 3 feet plus with bright pink flowers. 'Chelone obliqua' is more heat and sun tolerant with rosy-purple flowers on 2-3 feet stems. 'Chelone glabra' bears white to pinkish white flowers. Chelones are propagated by seed, division in the spring and soft-tip cuttings in the summer. These plants like perpetually damp soil and pond edges.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
8-09, 9-09 or 10-09**

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

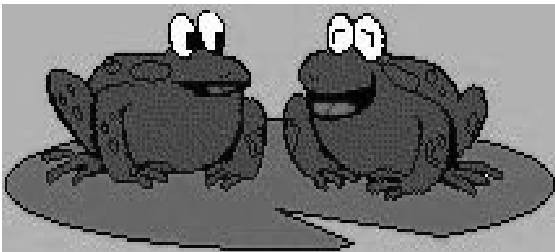
Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW  
Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

## 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)

## The Lily Pad

Published Monthly, February to November by the Topeka Area Water Garden Society (TAWGS), a non-profit organization. TAWGS does not warrant the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Topeka Area Water Garden Society.

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  
408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436  
785 364-3046

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

We reserve the right to edit input to meet publishing requirements. Copy cannot be returned.