



## 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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*Kip Walker points out the area prepared for matrix boxes in a rain garden.*

## New ideas for rain gardens and rain harvesting

Kip Walker gave an interesting power point presentation at the July TAWGS meeting when he talked about new technology for rain gardens and rain harvesting.

Kip said that he has been working with Eric Wood with Complete Aquatics to learn the leading edge of technology in that area. He said a lot of new technology has been developed in recent years because of the increased interest in reducing storm water run off, especially in larger cities, and in improving the water quality of the water that ends up in our waterways.

One way to reduce water runoff from roofs is to place a rain barrel under the down spouts of the house. One half inch of rain falling on a roof can easily fill a 55 gallon rain barrel. The barrel not only helps reduce the amount of water that is dumped into the storm water system, it also allows it to be harvested later for watering plants and landscapes, providing two benefits for the homeowner.

Several years ago Kansas City came up with the idea of building 10,000 rain gardens to help reduce flooding in flood prone areas where streets, parking lots and roofs contribute to a lot of run off during heavy rain storms. An easy and inexpensive way to reduce water flow is to hollow out a low area where water collects and

## Monthly Meeting

7:00 Wed., July 21, 2010

Historic Old Prairie Town  
(formerly Ward Meade Park)

## To Be Announced

turn it into a rain garden. The soil can be amended with diatomaceous earth to absorb more water. Plants will slow and purify the water flow with their deep root systems.

More sophisticated and expensive systems have been developed by digging deep trenches, placing a liner and underlayment in the trench; then placing a matrix system (with a cleanout and pump at one end) and then covering the area with two feet of soil. Shrubs and plants (perennials, vegetable, cutting, butter fly, etc.) can be planted and mulched to help incorporate an attractive area in the landscape. Downspouts from the structure will drain into the matrix area which can hold water for several weeks. It can then be re-circulated back on top of the soil with a soaker hose to water the plants during dry periods.

Statistics that Kip gave were: the national average for water usage is that we use 70% of our water outside and only 30% inside; the earth has only 3% fresh water and 97% salt water. Both of these statistics show why we need to protect and preserve our clean water supply.

To re-cap why we need to build rain gardens:

- Rain gardens help prevent or slow down erosion.
- Rain gardens help reduce pollution that goes into our water ways.
- We are overloading our sewer systems, some of which are outdated.
- Storm water run off is normally warmer, which increases the water temperature of our waterways.

Kip is the owner of PADS (Professional Aquatic Design and Supplies), which specializes in design, sales and installation of water gardens and rain gardens. Floyd Gruver won the door prize provided by Kip – a 13 oz. can of Microbe-Lift Legacy Koi and Goldfish Food.

## TAWGS Minutes July 21, 2010

President Don Taliaferro called the July meeting to order at 7:00 with self introductions.

Bob Saathoff introduced Kip Walker as our speaker for the evening. Kip spoke on the latest techniques for rain gardens and rain harvesting.

Bob Saathoff announced a volunteer appreciation lunch at the Garden House at Lake Shawnee on 7-28-10 at 12:00 p.m. There is an RSVP to Julie Trowbridge at 291-2621.

Phil Thompson reported to us that the tickets sold and money made on the pond tour was about the same as 2009. He will have exact figures next meeting. Phil suggests that we might want to make some changes next year as we are not getting enough participation from our club membership. There were not enough volunteers to pond sit at the ponds wanting sitters. Phil does not want to be the chairman of the pond tour next year but will help whoever is the pond tour chairman all he can. Also, Hi Stockwell will not be doing our book next year. We thank him for the many years he has done such a wonderful job on the book.

There were some suggestions made that we might combine the pond tour and garden tour next year or possibly have the two tours farther apart. Phil also suggested that we start planning the pond tour immediately for next year. Diane Gruver suggested that we only do a single sheet listing the addresses of the people on the tour instead of doing the tour book. Someone suggested that tickets could be sold at the first pond if people showed up without tickets.

Phil suggested that we sell the vouchers for \$5 and raise the ticket price to \$7 when they go on sale. Phil said 25% of the sales were from the vouchers.

Mark Weaver made a motion to pay back \$2,000 of the \$6,000 we still owe the Foundation. Don Regier seconded. Motion carried. Another \$2,000 of what we owe can be worked off with volunteer work done by the members Ray Schroeder said. It will be calculated on \$10.00 an hour per person. Mary Weaver volunteered to set up a schedule. Our group will be responsible for the area around the water features during the growing season and will include weeding. Other clubs that meet at Ward Meade will be responsible for other areas of the park.

Ray reminded us of his retirement party 8-6-10 from 6 – 10 p.m. at Ward Meade. Kip Walker drew for the door prize that Floyd Gruver won. It was koi and goldfish food. We thank Kip for providing this.

Duane Eberhardt mentioned they had been to the pond tour in Kansas City where they had seen elephant ear plant leaves used to make water features and stepping stones. If anyone has any to give Duane he would appreciate it. Big hosta leaves could also be used.

Kip Walker is going as our club's representative to a meeting in Gage Park in August to discuss ideas for a water feature where the Discovery Center is being built.

Tom Platis reported that the Apple Fest will be Sunday, October 3, and he will be asking for volunteers next month.

Helen Platis brought up the subject of refreshments at our meetings and whether we should make any changes.

It was decided for now that we would leave it the way it is and let people sign up if they want to participate. If no one signs up we will just have no refreshments that month.

Tom Platis made a motion we adjourn the meeting and Mark Weaver seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## Moisture loving plants

by Duane Van Dolah

## Society garlic



### *Tulbaghia violacea*

Society garlic has a named cultivar called 'Variegata' or 'Silver Lace' that comes from South Africa. Similar to garlic, it is most closely related to the Narcissis family (daffodils). It forms a clump of 4 to 9 narrow, blue-green and cream-striped leaves up to 30 inches long and half inch wide. A single flower stalk grows up from the rhizome, which is slightly longer than the leaves and has clusters of lilac to lavender colored flowers. The sweet smelling flowers are tubular expanding to six-pointed stars at their ends. Eight to twenty flowers are on each stalk, that appear in early summer to late fall. The leaves and rhizome smell like garlic when crushed, but the flowers have a hyacinth scent.

The Society Garlic grows in moist to dry conditions but will grow well in a bog garden. It likes full sun to part-sun, but the less sun it gets the less blooms it produces. The plants thrive in zones 7-10. The leaves can be used in salads and soups. Propagation is by division of the rhizome in early spring and seed. 'Silver Lace' or Variegated Society Garlic is not as aggressive and is slower growing than the solid green species and has larger flowers and cream-striped leaves. 'Tricolor' has pink and cream variegation in its leaves.

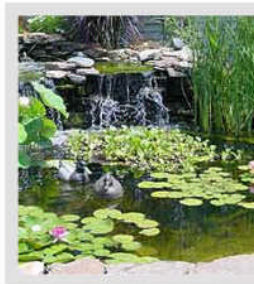
## Refreshments for 2010

August  
Sept.  
Oct.  
Nov.

Tom and Helen Platis  
Ed & Linda Klem  
Floyd & Diane Gruver  
Pot Luck

# Keeping your waterfall free of algae and buildup

*Reprinted from The Pond Guy 7-17-10*



While the warm sunny weather is great for enjoying the outdoors this summer, it can also create some headaches in your water garden. A lot of you may notice that your stream and waterfalls are growing a nice coat of green algae as we continue through the warmer summer months. In a lot of cases, especially if you are using beneficial bacteria such as Nature's Defense your water is clear but algae and debris is attaching itself to your stream, waterfall and rocks. There is really simple fix to this green monster, in less than 15 minutes you can have amazing results.

It's simple, use Pond Logic Oxy-Lift Defense direct to your waterfall, stream, or anywhere you have debris or algae accumulating. When used on damp areas, the Oxy-Lift Defense will lift stuck on debris and algae off their attached surface so they can be easily rinsed away avoiding the need for a pressure wash or tough manual labor. Simply shut down your waterfall and quickly remove any debris or algae with your hand, then sprinkle on the Oxy-Lift, you'll be able to hear the Oxy-Lift working to break the debris off the rocks. After 10-15 min restart your waterfall. You can scoop the loose algae out of the pond or let your skimmer do the work. We recommend applying Oxy-Lift later in the day when you will not be viewing the pond as the pond may become a little cloudy or foamy for a short period of time. Regularly cleaning your waterfall will ensure that maintenance is short and sweet keeping you from having to spend hours trying to wrestle your stream and waterfalls into submission.

If you are having issues with algae not only on the stream but also in the pond itself you can also apply a dose of Tetra Pond Algae Control to quickly kill undesirable growth in the pond even if it contains fish and plants! Using the proper products to maintain your pond will save you time and money in the long run and ensure a faster turn around process should your pond find itself in an algae attack? While algae blooms cannot always be prevented the duration and intensity of their visit can drastically be reduced when your pond is properly kept.

## Barley vs chemical control

*Reprinted from The Pond Guy 7-21-2010*

While you don't enjoy seeing algae in your pond you may also not be too enthusiastic about adding chemicals to remedy the problem. Fortunately you have another option when it comes to algae control additives before you resort to chemical treatments.

Simply put, the decomposition process of barley straw releases a byproduct that inhibits algae growth.

When used proactively barley straw can prevent algae blooms from establishing in your water feature. One of the main drawbacks of using barley straw was that you had to wait 6 to 8 weeks for the decomposition process to start. It was also a bit messy and consumed a considerable amount of space. Over time products like barley straw pellets and barley straw extract plus were developed to improve results in a shorter amount of time. Barley straw extract plus contains the beneficial components of barley straw decay infused with a beneficial bacteria, which means once you add it to your pond it immediately goes to work against future algae growth while reducing muck and organic debris. Barley Straw products are a great first resort in water garden maintenance because they are natural eco friendly products that are safe for your fish, plants and pets.

Barley straw products are an excellent first step in the fight for a crystal clear pond, but they are by no means a guaranteed solution in every situation. There are always cases where using an aquatic algaecide like PondCare AlgaeFix or TetraPond Algae Control. A prime example of such instances are in scenarios where your pond already has an established algae bloom. Using an algaecide will provide dramatic results in a short time which makes them highly desirable. Chemicals designed for use in water gardens are typically friendly for fish and plants but you should always read the product label before you make your purchase.

Both barley products and chemical products are effective means of fighting algae. Having the knowledge to choose the appropriate product for your unique situation will help keep more green in your wallet and less in your pond. Think of barley straw products as more of a proactive approach to algae prevention and your chemicals as a reactive treatment.

## Auto-Fill: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

by ERIK TATE Operations Manager The Water Garden WaterGarden.com

*Reprinted from 6-06 The Water Garden*

**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 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

**Continued on page 4**

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

### Calendar of Events

- Aug. 18 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting
- Sept. 15 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting
- Oct. 3 – Apple Fest
- Oct. 20 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting
- Nov. 17 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

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**Auto Fill continued from Page 3**

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

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
6-10, 7-10 or 8-10**

**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 2010 OFFICERS:

- |                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Don Taliaferro<br>Topeka | President<br>785-272-8348      |
| Bob Saathoff<br>Topeka   | Vice President<br>785-272-7125 |
| Sandy Regier<br>Topeka   | Secretary<br>785-286-9998      |
| Jim Green<br>Topeka      | Treasurer<br>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*

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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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