



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 14, Issue 7

Should I add submerged plants to my Water Garden

The Pond Guy 7-23-11

Let's face it: floating and surface plants, like lilies and hyacinths, are the rock stars of any water garden.



They're the show-offs, the preeners, the colorful ones that visitors "ooh" and "aah" over; the divas that pond owners proudly feature on center stage.

But, may we ask, where would the rock star be without his support crew – the techies, the roadies, the groupies? Still playing air guitar in front of his mirror, that's where. Lilies, hyacinths and the like just happen to be the most visible and attractive feature of a supportive ecosystem that should include their plainer relatives – the Submerged plants, like Vallisneria, Red Ludwigia, Hornwort and Parrot's Feather. These worker plants compete with algae for the nitrogen produced by decaying plants and fish waste, produce oxygen to help keep the pond properly aerated, and provide shade and shelter for koi and other fish. Submerged plants may not be flashy, but they're a critical component in maintaining water quality and general pond health.

The easiest way to add one of these workers to your water garden is to plant its stems in a Laguna Submersible Pond Planting Basket along with an ample supply of Microbe-Lift Aquatic Planting Media, and place it on the bottom of the pond. The baskets come in various sizes with mesh sides and bottoms – this allows the plant to seek nourishment outside the basket, without the risk of growing out of control.

Any performer will tell you that a well-fed support crew is a happy support crew. So to make sure your submerged plants are getting the nutrition they need, we highly recommend the Laguna Temperature Activated Aquatic Fertilizer Spikes, a verbal mouthful that also delivers the goods. Simply push a spike into the soil near the plant until the cap is just above the surface and you're all set for a year.

So, by all means, add submerged plants to your water garden and let your lilies rock on!

August 1, 2011

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m., August 17
Historic Old Prairie Town
(formerly Ward Meade Park)

To Be Announced

TAWGS Minutes 7-20-11

On 7-20-11, Don Taliaferro called our meeting to order with self introductions.

Ray Schroeder talked about the upcoming project at Old Prairie Town to put in a dry stream bed. He and his crew recently moved the majority of the rocks from what used to be Puddles and Pads to here. The stream bed will be approximately 100 feet long and will help divert water from problem areas.

Floyd Gruver made a motion for our club to help with this project and Mary Weaver seconded. Motion carried. Don Taliaferro said that we will plan to work August 5th and 6th, starting at 7:00 a.m. We need some people to go to Puddles and get the rest of the small rocks and bio fall and skimmer boxes. Ray Schroeder said he might be able to have a pickup at Puddles to load the small rocks on. Ray's crew will dig the stream bed and we will place the rocks.

Jim Green was not here tonight so we had no treasurer's report.

Mary Weaver reported that the pond tour was a big success. Phil Thompson reported that there were 269 tickets sold, which was about 200 less than last year. We made about \$1,500 profit this year and \$2,600 last year, but it was a lot less work this year. Phil made a few suggestions for next year's pond tour: higher prices, TAWGS brochure handout to people on tour, having tour in June instead of July, have pond sitters both days but only until 3:00, and try and start getting ponds now for next year. Phil pulled up all the ponds that had been on tour in the last 10 years and came up with 112 ponds. These would be good contacts to be on the tour next year.

Don Taliaferro thanked Mary Weaver and Phil Thompson for the great job they did heading the pond

tour.

As Don reported last month, we are still looking for a chairperson to take care of our part at the Apple Fest on October 2nd, which includes beans, sauerkraut, coleslaw and chips. We need to have someone by our August meeting.

Hi Stockwell and Mike Bradley volunteered to do the refreshments for our August meeting. Ed and Linda Klem for September and Mary Weaver for October.

The Member pond tour will be August 21. starting at 2:00 and ending up at Brickyard Barn Inn for potluck. A list of the members on the tour will be handed out at the next meeting, or mailed.

Don Taliaferro said he would ask Deb Spencer from Waters Edge in Lawrence to be a speaker for our October meeting and our September meeting might be at Shawnee Lake if we can get Dave Bartle to give us a tour of the gardens.\

Bob Saathoff said we could use more volunteers to take care of our area of Old Prairie Town which includes water features and beds around them.

Bill Kraus made a motion to approve the minutes as written in the Lily Pad. Don Regier seconded, motion carried.

Mary Weaver made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Phil Thompson seconded. Motion carried.

After the meeting we enjoyed the delicious refreshments provided by Floyd and Diane Gruver. We thank them very much.

Water Plants

by Duane VanDolah

Obedient plant

Physostegia

Other names for this plant are False dragonhead and Lion heart. The common name of obedient plant comes from the plants



having hinged stalks that allow the flowers to be bent in any direction and stay there. This plant gets 3 feet tall with a spread of the clump 2 feet wide. Certain species of the Obedient Plant can be invasive through runners, especially in sandy loam. Clayish soil seems to keep it controlled.

In late summer and early fall, hooded, twin lipped flowers form on spikes in shades of white, pinks, and lavenders. The blooms start from the bottom and move up. The leaves are green and narrow lanced shaped, and with slightly toothed edges. The zones for this plant are 4-11 in sun and part-shade. The more common species like moist, to wet soil throughout the season but prefers a dryer condition during the winter.

Propagation is by division in the spring or from seed. *P. virginiana*, is a native of eastern United States and is the most common garden variety. Some of the cultivars are 'Vivid', which is more compacted and denser, with dark

lilac-pink flowers. 'Variegata' is the variegated form with purplish pink flowers. 'Summer Snow' is pure white. *P.leptophylla* is the true aquatic species of the Obedient Plant. The height is 3-4 feet tall and with a 2 feet spread. Flowers are a lavender-pink, and it will grow in moist soil and water depth to 1 inch. It grows in sun, part-shade, and can even tolerate deep shade. Its zones are 5-11 but needs to be over wintered in a pond submerged in the water below the ice.

One interesting note is that gardeners have had good luck growing the Obedient Plant under walnut trees, which is normally toxic to most plants.



Waterfalls and aeration

The Pond Guy 7-6-11

Waterfalls are one of nature's greatest creations. In addition to providing breathtaking beauty and

places for daredevils to kayak and– for some inexplicable reason – ride over in padded barrels, they serve as massive aeration systems, introducing fresh oxygen into the ecosystem that fish and plants need to thrive. In backyard ponds, waterfalls serve many of the same functions – but their scale is often inadequate to provide sufficient aeration. They also fall a bit short as places for kayakers and barrel riders to strut their stuff.

So, while your backyard waterfall definitely helps to keep water oxygenated, additional aeration is always helpful – especially when algae begins to grow, and fish are faced with warming water and reduced oxygen levels. To provide the aeration any backyard pond needs, we strongly recommend our KoiAir™ and PondAir™ Aeration Systems. With a wide variety of options available for ponds of every size and depth, these systems help to increase circulation and reduce stratification to provide the healthiest possible environment for fish and decorative plants.

For signs that your pond's aeration is insufficient, look for increases in muck and debris at the pond bottom. When properly aerated, muck is broken up naturally, leaving the bottom clean and the water clear. If you have fish, and they surface regularly or gather beneath a waterfall, your aeration may be inadequate. If that's the case, you'll give your fish cause for celebration by installing additional aeration – and you'll have the satisfaction of a clean, clear pond that makes your backyard the perfect sanctuary.

20th Annual Topeka Pond Tour Pictures

For more beautiful pictures check out the website: www.tawgs.org. Many thanks to Phil Thompson, Mary Weaver, Linda Klem, and everyone else that had a part in making the pond tour successful!



Jim & Susan Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST



Jon & Katie Whisman, 7513 SW Imperial Court



Scott & Truanna Nickel, Brickyard Barn Inn



Kip & Paul Walker, 6526 SW Wentley Lane



Kevin & Rhoda Han, 6200 SW 34th Terrace



Jeffrey & Michelle Parker, 4412 NW Halfday Lane

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

2011 Calendar of Events

Aug. 5	Dismantle pond at P&P
Aug. 6	Build streambed at WMP
Aug. 17	Monthly Meeting
Aug. 21	Member Pond Tour
Sept. 21	Monthly Meeting
Oct. 2	Apple Fest
Oct. 19	Monthly Meeting
Nov. 16	Monthly Meeting

Ants are really bad this year and people are wondering how to kill them near their water garden or koi pond but have concerns about accidentally poisoning their fish. Diatomaceous earth (DE) has proven to be an effective and natural ant control. If a little gets in the pond water there should be no harm done. DE is commonly available at many garden centers. Follow the label's instructions for use.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads
 6-11, 7-11 or 8-11**

**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

2011 OFFICERS:

Don Taliaferro Topeka	President 785-272-8348
Bob Saathoff Topeka	Vice President 785-272-7125
Sandy Regier Topeka	Secretary 785-286-9998
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

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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
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 785-364-3046

fdgruver@embarqmail.com

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