



## 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 4

May 1, 2011

### April 20, 2011 TAWGS minutes

Don Taliaferro called our meeting to order with self introductions.

Bob Saathoff introduced our speaker, Carroll Morgenson, who is president of the Garden Council. Carroll was a landscape architect for KDOT for many years. The Garden Council includes all the Garden Clubs of Topeka. Their purpose is to help clubs and members in their gardening. Meetings are at Old Prairie Town on the First Monday of most months at 9:00 a.m. There are representatives from each club that attend, however at present, TAWGS doesn't have anyone representing us. Anyone can attend. Their main fund raiser of the year is a plant sale at Fairlawn Plaza, which is April 30. The Council helps with projects, mainly at Old Prairie Town and also other places when needed.

Motion was made by Phil Thompson to approve minutes of our March meeting as written in the Lily Pad. Linda Klem told us we had spelling of Klem wrong in the March minutes so correction of Klum to Klem was made. Don Regier seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer, Jim Green reported we have \$1,669.94 in our checking account. Mark Weaver made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Bob Saathoff seconded. Motion carried.

Jim Green checked with the Secretary of State's office to see if we were still registered and found out our filing had been forfeited because we failed to pay the annual fee. We would need \$140.00 to bring us current and new paperwork filled out. The main benefit for doing this is no one can take our name. A motion was made to do this but was tabled until the next meeting so Jim Green can talk to Tom Platis about this, since Tom had done the filing in the past.

The Pond tour meeting 4-6-11 had about 10 people attend. Tour will be July 9-10. Tickets will be \$5.00 and will be sold as single sheet of paper in black and white with all pond locations and map included. Also, the sheet will have 6 spaces for advertising. The cost of printing tickets will be about \$150.00. The tickets will go on sale June 1.

The plans are to invite the people whose ponds are on the tour to our June fish fry meeting. They will be able to pick up their signs at that time.

Mary Weaver said the VA pond needs to be cleaned out. She will talk to the VA about setting up a time for us to do this.

**Monthly Meeting  
7:00 p.m., May 18**

**Historic Old Prairie Town  
(formerly Ward Meade Park)**

**The program will be  
announced later**

Bob Saathoff said the pond with our name on it at Lake Shawnee is really looking good but will need to be partially cleaned out of some of the lotus plants and other plants.

Ray Schroeder said in a couple of weeks annuals will be planted at Old Prairie Town. A date was set for May 7 at 9:00 a.m. to clean the lower end of Anna's pond. Ray said he would drain water out the day before. He suggests we bring buckets to scoop out muck.

Michael Bradley talked about the area called the Villages, which includes about 372 acres near the museum. Students from Washburn Tech are helping to excavate the area to make a native water garden.

Carroll Morgenson said that water garden entries are needed for the TBA contest held every year the end of June.

Michael Bradley made a motion to adjourn our meeting. Tom Routh seconded. Motion carried.

## Moisture loving plants

By Duane VanDolah

### Fingerleaf Rodgersia



#### *Rodgersia Aesculifolia*

The Fingerleaf Rodgersia is a perennial from China that produces large horse chestnut shaped, 5-7 lobed leaves which are crinkled, dark green, and

coarsely-toothed. In late summer the leaves take on a bronze tinting before the plant goes dormant in the fall. The clump-forming plant reaches 3-6 feet high and with a spread of 3 feet. It spreads by a thick, black rhizome underground. A 2 foot flower stalk appears from June through August with white-to-pink clusters of flower florets forming on the upright stalk. The tiny flowers form into a pyramidal shape much like the Astilbe that share the same family, Saxifrage. The deep veins of the leaves, flower, and plant stalk have reddish-brown hairs that give it a wooly appearance. It grows best in zones 5-8 and sun-to-part shade in a sheltered place away from strong, dry winds that will shatter the leaves.

The water needs of this plant is consistency moist to wet conditions, such as near a stream or in a bog with mildly acidic, humus-rich soil. In China the plants' medicinal uses were for rheumatoid arthritis, chronic bronchitis, dysentery, asthma, bronchial inflammation and chronic gastritis. Also it was used as a broad-spectrum antibacterial and anti-viral treatment. Propagation is by dividing the root ball in early spring and by seed.

## Introducing new fish



*The Pond Guy 4-22-11*

So you've made the decision to invite a few new friends to your home, but are you getting more than you bargained for? As is true with any purchase, you want to make sure you are getting quality before you hand over your hard-earned dollars. Inspect the fish you intend to purchase for symptoms of illness or poor health. Look over their fins, mouth, and gills for blemishes, discoloration, or signs of fin rot and check their body for growths, loose or missing scales, or other blemishes as they may be an early indicator of disease or parasites. Take a few moments to observe your prospect's behavior to make sure they are active and having no mobility hindrances.

Your newly purchased fish are typically handed over to you in an oxygenated plastic bag or container to allow adequate time to transport them to their new home. While it may be tempting to just dump them into your water garden upon your return home, you will want to make sure your pond is ready to accommodate its new inhabitants before you begin their acclimation process. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Make sure the water in your pond is free from potential fatal heavy metals and chlorine and replenish the protective slime coating of your fish by adding Pond Logic Stress Reducer Plus during your water changes.

To help prevent disease and reduce fish stress in your new tenants, add Pond Salt to the water between your water changes. To ensure the well being of your Aquatic Plants, only add 1 1/4 cups per 100 gallons of pond water.

You can purchase a Master Test Kit to verify acceptable pH and Nitrate levels in the pond. You can prevent many potential health issues throughout your fish population by simply maintaining a clean and

healthy pond. You can read more about pond maintenance here.

Now that the pond is ready for the addition of fish, it is time to get your finned friends ready for the big show. You will want to gradually equalize the temperature of the water your fish are currently occupying with that of the water in your pond. If the container carrying your fish floats, go ahead and place it in your pond. As the bag bobbles around in your pond, the water inside will start balancing with the outside water temperature. This process should take no longer than 30 minutes.

During this time frame, slowly add small amounts of water from the pond into the container which will allow your new fish time to acclimate to the chemistry of your pond water. Most of us have, at one time or another, jumped into a pool too early in the summer only to find that the water is unimaginably cold. Those of you who've been in that situation understand why you will want to take your time with the acclimation process. Now that the water on both sides of the container is the same and the fish have had time to try out the make up of the water in the pond, you are clear to release them into their new environment! Take a few moments throughout the day to check in on the pond and monitor the behavior of the newly introduced fish. Active and curious fish are happy and healthy fish.

## Sincere Sympathy

**We extend our sincere sympathy to Nancy Mulder and her family on the death of her husband Ken. Ken had been battling lung cancer for quite awhile.**

**The Mulder's have been TAWGS members for several years and were on the Member Pond Tour a few years ago. They live in Auburn. Ken will be missed by all.**

## Oh no, a leak

*The Pond guy 5-1-10*

Having a leak in your Pond Liner can be frustrating at best, but not being able to locate the source of the water loss can be maddening. While repairing a leak in your pond is never your ideal way to spend time at your water garden, knowing how to locate and stop your leaks can change an extremely bothersome job into a relatively smooth process.

**Now You See It ... Now You Don't**

It is normal to experience some water loss in your pond throughout the season. This is due to evaporation. In areas with warmer climates it is not uncommon to lose a couple of inches of water each week. While evaporation is a natural process it can still be annoying at times as it will require you to add water to your pond to maintain your normal water level. Installing an Auto Fill Valve in your

skimmer will keep ensure your pond is always at your desired water level without you having to go out and physically fill it. For those of you who experience small water loss like this during your warmer seasons, feel free to let out a sigh of relief, there will be no leak hunting for you today.

### **Learn To Locate Your Leaks**

Alliteration aside, if you are losing more than a few inches a water from your pond in a short time span it is time to sniff out these leaks and seal them up. The best way to find the source of your water loss is to start with the obvious as it may save you the time and trouble of moving the rocks in your pond, or worse, pulling up your plumbing.

### **Look For Low Edges or Overspill**

Inspect the edges of your pond, waterfall, and stream bed. Make sure there is no water spilling over the edges of these areas and if you have tight turns in your stream make sure the water able to follow the curve without splashing out. Check for damp areas or pooling water outside of the pond for indications of such leaks. If the water level exceeds the level of your pond liner you will want to adjust the level of the overflow drain in your skimmer to maintain a shallower water body. If you are losing water from the falls or stream bed re-arrange the rocks to remove obstructions and create gentler curves.

### **Shut Down Your Pump**

If your search for the obvious turns out uneventful it is time to check the pond area itself. Shut down your pumps and turn off your auto fill valve if you have one. If you experience significant water loss from the pond then you have now successfully narrowed the search for the leak. If you have fish in your pond you will want to run an alternate form of Aeration while your system is shut down as the process can take a day or two. If the leak is in the side of the pond liner the water level will drop to the height of the cut in your liner and stop. If the leak is in the bottom of the pond the pond will eventually empty out so make sure you are periodically checking in on your project.

### **Inspect Your Skimmer and Plumbing**

If the water is successfully being held in the pond with the pump off the leak may be in the Skimmer Box or the plumbing itself. Inspect the skimmer box and try to locate a crack or hole. Inspect and tighten the fittings going from the skimmer box or pump to the Waterfall Box. Follow the tubing path and look for any water dampness in the ground. If there is, there's a good chance coupler fittings are loose or you have a leak in the tubing.

### **Got Milk?**

For the areas that make sense, you can use milk or Pond Shade and an eye dropper to visually track the flow of the water leaving the pond. Go along the edges of the pond and apply drops to pinpoint the area of the pond where your pond water is making its great escape. Move any rocks or plants in that area and get ready to show this leak whose boss.

### **Put On The Patch.**

Once you have located the cut in your pond liner clean off any dirt or debris from the general area. If the hole is a small cut or puncture you can use Underwater

Pond Sealer to cover the area and stop the leak. You do not have to drain the pond to use this type of sealant as it will cure underwater, just make sure that you apply the product in a bead and do not press it flat. You can use the Underwater Pond Sealer to patch holes in your waterfall box and skimmer as well. For holes up to 5" you can also purchase a Patch Kit. These kits will come with an adhesive patch that attaches directly to your liner after you have cleaned it and made sure it is dry. If you have opened the flood gates and put a puncture larger than 5" in the pond you can purchase additional Pond Liner and some Seam Tape to repair the damage. The use of seam tape will also require you to clean and dry the areas of liner surrounding the hole. After applying Seam Tape, we recommend using Cover Tape to ensure the leak is secure. Regardless of which type of repair you use you will want to overlap the cut, tear, or hole by at least 1" to ensure an adequate seal.

## **Fertilizing pond plants**

### ***The Pond Guy 5-29-10***

Behind the scenes your Aquatic Plants will soon be working hard to filter nutrients from the water in your pond, provide shelter for its residents, and keep algae blooms to a minimum. While this may seem impressive to some, it is hard for most pond owners to get excited about aquatic plants unless they can do all of this work while looking good. Whoever coined the phrase "Looks aren't everything" obviously never owned a water garden.

If your aquatic plants are failing to impress you can use some plant fertilizer to give them the boost they need to ensure your pond has more buds and less duds this season. The type of fertilizer you use will depend on the type of plants in your pond and how they are implemented.

Liquid fertilizers like Microbe-Lift Bloom & Grow are mixed directly into your pond water, providing a readily available food source throughout the entire pond. This type of application is great for ponds with an abundance of scattered plants, Floating Plants, and plants that are in areas lacking Planting Media.

Concentrated fertilizers like TetraPond LilyGro Tablets and Laguna Fertilizer Pond Spikes are used for potted plants or plants with roots planted in media. Simply push these fertilizers into the planting media and they will gradually release nutrients that your plants. When you are using concentrated fertilizers in your pond, carefully read the directions for each individual product for specific application instructions and warnings. For example, when using LilyGro tablets you will want to place them about 3" away from the crown of the plant to ensure the fertilizer does not burn the roots or stem.

The amount of fertilizer you need and intervals at which you re-apply them will depend on which type you are using and variable factors such as average water temperatures and how many plants are in the pond. Applications can range from once a season to ever 2-4 weeks. Whichever type or brand of fertilizer you use in your pond make sure it is low in or completely free of phosphates which can encourage algae growth. Microbe-Lift Bloom & Grow is an entirely phosphate free product.

Fertilizing your plants will encourage increased growth and color in healthy plants to push them to perform at their best. Fertilizers will not be an effective substitute for gardening know how. If your plants are constantly dying make sure they are being planted in the right Temperature Zone and are being used in the correct applications. Bog Plants like Dwarf Cattails for example should not be entirely submerged in your pond, tropical plants like Antares should not be planted in cold climates and so on.

Continued on page 4

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

## 2011 Calendar of Events

May 18	Monthly Meeting
June 15	Monthly Meeting
June 25-26	TBA Tour
July 9-10	Topeka Pond Tour
July 20	Monthly Meeting
Aug. 17	Monthly Meeting
Sept. 21	Monthly Meeting
Oct. 19	Monthly Meeting
Nov. 16	Monthly Meeting

### Continued from page 3

Do some homework, read the descriptions and text included with your plants and fertilizers to ensure you select the correct products for your unique water gardening scenario. Once your aquatic plants are established and growing, you can then decide if you need fertilizer to give them a kick in the bud to bloom at their best.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
 3-11, 4-11 or 5-11**

**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](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.