



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 17, Issue 3

April 1, 2014



Deb Spencer talks about building your own bio-filter. Photo by Sherry Reed.

The nitty gritty on bio-filters

By Sherry Reed

Deb Spencer from Water's Edge gave a very interesting and informative presentation on bio-filters at the March 19, 2014 meeting of TAWGS. Mechanical filters help protect the pumps in our ponds and collect and remove debris. But the main purpose is to get rid of the things we don't see, ammonia and other sediments to keep our fish healthy. You cannot have a filter that is too big.

The different parts of the filters were shown and discussed. There is the tank where the water enters the bottom and flows up through poly filter mats, media bags containing bio-balls or lava rocks, through the top screens, over the top, into your pond. The top screens can be camouflaged with plants which will also help filter the water.

Deb also demonstrated and discussed the different media materials used in filtration systems based on their ability to clean by specific surface area (or ssa) per cubic foot. The higher the ssa, the higher the filtration. Pea gravel has a 72 ssa, lava rock 86, bio balls 120, bio ribbon 160, poly-flow 290.

She also gave us information about gravel bog and pottery bog filtration.

To have a successful filtration system it requires these things: right temperatures, oxygen, food source, surface area and carbon.

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m. April 16, 2014
Historic Old Prairie Town, 124 NW Fillmore
Speaker
To be announced



Moisture loving plants

By Duane Van Dolah

Queen of the prairie

Filipendula Rubra

This plant is a native wildflower and loves wet-to-moist conditions to be happy. Also called Meadowsweet, this plant rises to a height of 4 to 6 feet tall with a spread of 3 to 4 feet by rhizomes. The central stem is smooth and reddish in color with large leaves that are deeply cut, yellow-green, compounded with 7-9 lanced-shaped leaflets. They are up to 2 feet long and 6 inches wide but get smaller and become more sparse as they get to the top of the stem. Besides the scented leaves, tiny Astilbe-like flower clusters are fragrant and pale pink in color. They are formed on bare stalks above the leaves with a width of 5-8 inches, having tiny flower heads that are only 1/3 of an inch across. Flowering occurs from early to mid summer for three weeks. The plant cannot be allowed to dry out and in a moist condition will form colonies. Part-shade is recommended because it prefers cooler temperatures and will get leaf burnt in full sun. In a bog it will grow into a large colony. It prefers to grow in zones 3-8 and division is by dividing the rhizomes and by seed collecting. 'VENUSTA' is a named cultivar of this plant.

TAWGS Minutes March 19-2014

President Tom Platis called meeting to order for the first meeting of 2014.

Self introductions were made.

Deb Spencer of Water's Edge presented a very interesting and informative presentation on bio filters.

Treasurer's report noted a beginning balance of \$2763.12; expenses were \$505.57; closing balance of \$2257.55. Don Reiger made a motion to accept the report and Don Taliaferro seconded the motion.

Old business: Don Taliaferro reported that all of the new membership cards have been distributed to all of the involved businesses except Blue Acres.

New business: Tom Hammer with Shawnee County Parks and Recreation spoke to the group about being involved with improvements being made on the reflecting pool in the Gage Park Rose garden. Ideas discussed were adding a fountain if power is available, potting the lilies and cleaning out other plants, etc. It was decided to table the discussion until the next meeting.

Bob Saathoff reported that the pond at the Midland Hospice House in need of a clean-up. He will schedule a weekend to work on this project at a later date.

Don Taliaferro moved that the dates for the 2014 Pond Tour would be June 28 and 29. Helen Platis seconded the motion.

Deb Spencer announced that Waters Edge will celebrate its 25th anniversary of business this year. They will have a open house celebration on May 3 and 4. She also thanked the TAWGS members for supporting Waters Edge.

Don Taliaferro made a motion to adjourn, Bob Saathoff seconded.

Sherry Reed, Secretary

TAWGS helps trim roses



Roy Ridgeway makes his way to prune another section of rose bushes at the Reinisch Rose Garden in Gage Park. Shawnee County Parks and Recreation performed the extensive pruning with assistance from several volunteers, including Ridgeway. Photo by Chris Neal, Capitol Journal
Topeka Area Water Garden Society was given

recognition in a recent article in the Topeka Capitol Journal for TAWGS members volunteering several days helping prune roses in the Reinisch Rose Garden in Gage Park.

Volunteer Roy Ridgeway said a vast majority of the 6,000 rose bushes in the garden had blackened stems. Although many were 4 to 6 feet tall, the hard winter with several days of below-zero temperatures made it necessary to prune the bushes down close to the ground.

Tom Hammer, horticulture supervisor for Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, said the past three years had warm winters and early springs, so the parks and rec department couldn't prune the roses much, and they kept getting taller. So this year, he said, they planned to trim them all the way down to the ground to keep them looking nice.

Ridgeway said he expected visitors to the rose garden will be able to see all of the bushes about 3 feet tall by Memorial Day.

The Shawnee County Parks and Rec website says the Reinisch Rose Garden contains about 400 varieties of roses.

Parts taken from an article written by Samatha Foster for the Topeka Capitol Journal.



Time for spring cleanout

The Pond Guy 3-15-14

Ice melting, sun shining, cabin fever driving you batty ... yep, spring must be on its way.

For water garden hobbyists, that means

one thing: It's time to head outside and prepare the pond for spring.

With some basic planning and a handy-dandy cheat sheet (like this one below), you will have your outdoor oasis cleaned up and ready for fun in no time.

Gather your tools, pull on your hip waders and gloves, and let's get cleaning!

1. **Evaluate the Pond.** The first step is to take a look at the pond and determine what kind of work needs to be done. Did you do a great job cleaning out the pond last fall? Did you procrastinate too long and let those leaves build up? Is it time to give the water feature a top-to-bottom scrubbing?
2. **Minimal Work Required.** If you adequately prepped the pond last fall and, after evaluating it this spring, discovered clear water and minimal debris, you'll only need to do some light cleaning. Scrub the rocks with Oxy-Lift™ Defense®, replace filter pads in the waterfall filter or skimmer box, and perform a 20 percent water change.
3. **Drain Pond, Relocate Your Fish.** If a complete cleanout is necessary, you'll need to drain the pond. Siphon some of the water into a holding tank for the fish, and transport them safely to their temporary home with a pond net. Add some

healthy oxygen to the water by submerging and turning on a bubbler or air stone in the tank.

4. **Check Tubing, Remove Debris.** While you're draining the pond, don't forget to purge the water from the tubing and remove any large debris, like branches or dead foliage, by hand.
5. **Power Wash Away.** To remove tough algae growth on rocks, liner and gravel, treat with Oxy-Lift™ Defense® and use a power washer to scrub away the debris if necessary.
6. **Skimmer, Waterfall Wash.** Once the dirty water has been drained from the pond, clean out the skimmer and waterfall boxes using a garden hose, spraying away excess muck and buildup. If the filter media looks worn down, now's the time to replace it.
7. **Check Lighting, Aerator.** With the water drained from the pond, you have a perfect opportunity to inspect any underwater lighting fixtures, check the bulbs and clean the lenses – or, better yet, add some new Pond Lighting for dramatic backyard effect. It's also a good time to check the aerator and make sure it's working properly.
8. **Reconnect and Reinstall.** If you removed and stowed the filter, pump and ultraviolet clarifier last fall, pull them back out and dust them off. Reconnect the plumbing and filters, and reinstall the pumps and UV clarifiers. While you're at it, change the UV bulbs, too; they need to be replaced once a year for optimal algae-control effect.
9. **Refill, Prep the Pond.** Once you're done with the spring cleaning chores, refill the pond with some fresh water. In addition, be sure to add some Stress Reducer PLUS, which removes chlorine, chloramines and heavy metal from tap water. Then acclimate the fish to the new water and add them back into the pond.
10. **Boost Your Bacteria.** Keep the water clean and clear by adding some beneficial bacteria to the pond. Test the water temperature to be sure it's above 55 °F and add PL Gel to the filter media and Seasonal Defense® to the pond water to help jump start the growth of good bacteria.
11. **Add Aquatic Plants.** Finally, be sure to add a variety of pond plants to the water feature. Bog plants beautify the circumference of the pond; floating plants, lilies and lotus provide shade and pops of color; and submerged plants release extra oxygen to the water. They all provide added all-natural filtration and habitat for all underwater pond dwellers.

A spring cleanout may seem like a daunting task, but the time and effort you put into it will pay off with a tranquil backyard oasis. Happy spring!

Spring green water

The Pond Guy 3-8-14

After a long, dreary winter, the sight of spring's green shoots and leaves are



a welcome sign – but not in your pond. Green water means algae growth, and that's not something you want to see flourish. Besides being unsightly, algae degrades your water quality and can actually harm your aquatic pets.

So what can you do to prevent your water garden from turning green?

1. **Add Seasonal Defense®:** As long as water temperatures are below 50° F, you can add Seasonal Defense® to your pond. It contains aerobic bacteria that are specially designed for cooler water. When used at this time of year, the waste-gobbling microorganisms will break down dead foliage, fish waste and other sediment that fuel algae growth in your pond.
2. **Keep Up on Your Chores:** Make sure you also keep up on your spring cleaning chores because all that decomposing debris feeds algae. Regularly check and clean out your skimmer basket, and remove any leaves or large pieces of debris that blow into the pond with your Collapsible Skimmer & Fish Net. This will encourage the beneficial bacteria in Seasonal Defense® to focus their energy on breaking down fine organic material and muck.
3. **Add Barley Straw Extract:** All-natural chemicals found in decomposing barley straw help keep your pond's water crystal clear. If you add Barley Extract, you don't have to wait for the straw to decompose. Simply add it to your water according to the label's instructions and enjoy a clean and healthy water feature. For best results, use Barley Extract in conjunction with Seasonal Defense®.

Looking for speakers

by Floyd Gruver, Vice President

What would you like to hear for programs at the TAWGS meetings?

Although we try to find subjects that relate to water gardening, we assume that anyone that likes ponds is also interested in their total landscaping.

If you have an idea please call me at 785-364-0684. We are looking for ideas from all of you. Thanks!

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

March 19	Monthly Meeting
April 16	Monthly Meeting
May 21	Monthly Meeting
June 18	Fish Fry at Saathoff's
June 28-29	Topeka Pond Tour
July 16	Monthly Meeting
August 20	Monthly Meeting
September 17	Monthly Meeting
October 5	Apple Fest
October 15	Monthly Meeting
November 19	Pot Luck

Happy Spring!

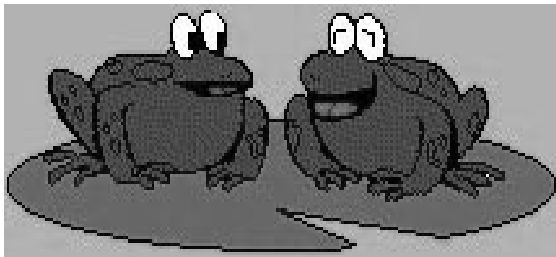


**Your Dues are Due if your label reads
 3-14, 4-14 or anytime in 2013**
 Please renew as soon as possible to continue
 receiving the newsletter.
 Send dues to
Jim Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY 2014 OFFICERS:

Tom Platis Topeka	President 785-478-9514
Floyd Gruver Holton	Vice President 785-364-3046
Sherry Reed Topeka	Secretary 785-408-5060
Jim Mowder Topeka	Treasurer 785-267-0672

Meetings are usually 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 Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, Topeka, KS 66605.



Check it out - 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:

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