



# *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 18, Issue 5**

**June 1, 2015**



## **Cleaning the filter**

*The Pond Guy 5-23-15*

The filtration system in your pond is made up of two parts: the mechanical filter and the biological filter.

They both clean and clarify the water, but they do so in very different ways and require very different cleaning regimens to keep them optimally operating.

### **The Mechanical Filter**

The skimmer or pump sock make up your mechanical filter. Able to function at all temperatures (as long as the water is liquid), their main purpose is to catch larger debris, like chunks of algae, leaves, foliage and other things that blow into your pond and settle on the water surface. These items are collected in a mat or debris net/basket as the water passes through the mechanical filter, which then protects the pump from clogging.

Cleaning the mechanical filter is easy. You simply remove the mat or debris net/basket, dump out the debris and rinse it with a garden hose. This can be done as often as you like or as needed when you see the water flow slow down. In fact, checking it often is a good idea, particularly in spring and fall when debris tends to collect in a pond.

### **The Biological Filter**

Your waterfall box, pressurized filter and in-pond filter filled with beneficial bacteria-covered filter media make up your biological filter. Their main purpose is to break down tiny, suspended debris, resulting in crystal clear water.

Here's how it works: Unlike a mechanical filter that physically removes debris, a biological filter works at a microscopic level. Aerobic beneficial bacteria colonize and flourish on the surface area of filter media – like BioBalls™, mats and the like. As the water passes through the filter media, the bacteria feed on the debris and remove it from the water. Because the beneficial bacteria are living microorganisms, they function best when water temperatures are near or above 50 degrees Fahrenheit when they're alive and kicking.

You don't really "clean" a biological filter at all

## **Note change of date!!!!**

**Monthly Meeting**

**6:30 p.m.**

**June 24**

**Historic Old Prairie Town, 124 NW Fillmore**

**Fish Fry & Pot Luck**

**Bring a couple dishes to share**

because you want to retain as much of the beneficial bacteria as possible. In the early spring, perform a cleanout and seed with natural bacteria like Microbe-Lift® PL Gel or Pond Logic® Seasonal Defense® to give your filter a fresh start. Throughout the season, do a mild rinse in a bucket of pond water only when the water flow begins to decline. Each time to clean or rinse your filter media, add a dose of Microbe-lift® PL Gel or bacteria from the Pond Logic® Defense PAC® to re-seed the bacteria and replenish any bacteria loss.

Though it may be tempting, don't power wash or swap out filter media mats. This strips the beneficial bacteria, which may take weeks to replenish! In the meantime, algae will feed on the unfiltered nutrients in the pond water, and you'll see your water quality diminish as fish waste accumulates – which is something you don't want!

## **TAWGS Minutes 5-20-15**

President Tom Platis called the meeting to order. Self-introductions were made.

Treasurer's report was approved by the group after Don Taliaferro made a motion for this action and seconded by Chris Newell.

VP Chris Newell gave a report on the progress of the 2015 pond tour. Nine ponds have been secured for the tour. Chris is working on a program for the tour (in booklet form) which will also serve as the \$6 ticket for visitors. He is also creating a poster to put at the sponsors place of business.

Several sponsors have been secured and will have advertisements in the program that is in process.

It was discussed to make a contract with

WaterScapes to improve and increase the storage space that is used by TAWGS for an ad in the program for WaterScapes. Chris Newell will donate his time and skills to make these improvements with TAWGS supplying the materials required. Chris will obtain the contract for this agreement. Jim Green made a motion to accept this proposal, seconded by Sandy Rieger, motion carried.

Some of the venues to let the community know about the pond tour will be Capitol Journal (which will feature one of the ponds in At Home in the Saturday paper the week before the tour), The Events Calendar, That Paper, Coffee News, Shawnee County Library, Kansas City Gardener. Don Taliaferro will also contact Cameron Rees.

Sandy Rieger and Linda Reynolds will coordinate pond sitters.

Chris has gotten some bids for printing the program booklets. Don Taliaferro will get another quote from the company that printed the programs for earlier pond tours.

Liability sheets have been given to pond hosts.

A BIG thank you goes out to Chris Newell, Don Taliaferro and Bob Saathoff for their hard work in making the pond tour happen this year. It is going to be a great success!

Jim Mowder shared how the memory brick for Susan Kraus will look which will be placed in the memory garden at Ward-Meade memory garden.

Our next meeting be the annual fish fry at Ward-Meade on June 24 at 6:30 pm. Pond hosts and sponsors will be invited to the event. Bob Saathoff will furnish the fish and the other TAWGS members are asked to provide at least two dishes to share with our guests and members.

Jim Green made a motion to adjourn, Don Taliaferro seconded this motion and it carried.

Sherry Reed, Sec.

tiny plants feed fish inhabitants, and it can also shade the pond's bottom, preventing subsurface nuisance plants from growing. In uncontrolled amounts, however, planktonic algae can cause oxygen depletions and fish kill.

- **Filamentous (string) algae** are single-celled plants that form long, visible chain, threads or filaments. These threads, which start growing along the bottom of the pond in shallow water or on rocks or other aquatic plants, intertwine and form mats that resemble wet wool. When these mats rise to the surface, they're commonly referred to as pond scum. These mats make great homes for micro- and macro-invertebrates, like bugs and worms, but they're also unsightly.

UV clarifiers work by destroying the ultrafine planktonic algae – but, unfortunately, they do nothing to combat the filamentous algae. You'll need a different strategy for the stringy stuff.

### Battling Planktonic Algae

So how does ultraviolet light fight planktonic algae? When the algae cells are exposed to the bulb's ultraviolet rays, radiation destroys the plants' cellular walls. As a result, the tiny particles of dead algae clump together, and those clumps are then removed by your mechanical filtration system.

For the UV clarifier to work properly, however, follow these guidelines:

- **Replace bulbs yearly.** Worn-out bulbs – even if they still light up – may not be as effective at controlling green water.
- **Watch your flow rate.** Pushing water past the UV too fast can damage the unit and not allow enough contact time with the UV bulb for it to be effective.
- **Don't flow too slow.** Running a UV at too slow of a flow will act as a sterilizer and may also have a negative affect on natural bacteria meant to help decompose dead organics and fish waste.

### Finding Balance

If you have an algae problem, be it planktonic or filamentous, it indicates your pond is out of balance. An ultraviolet clarifier should actually be one of your last tactics! Add some beneficial bacteria from the Pond Logic® DefensePAC® Pond Care Package to help reduce the amount of organics in your pond. Start aerating the water. Consider using pond dye. If you have a thriving fish population, think about finding a new home for them (but don't release them into the wild!). Manage the nutrients, sunlight and oxygen levels, and your algae proliferation should naturally level out on its own.

## Pond Fun Fact

*Koi eggs are very, very sticky and will adhere to anything in the pond, including pond walls, plants, filters, pumps, etc....*

**Don't forget the date for the June meeting has been changed to June 24!!!**



## UV & algae

*The Pond Guy 5-16-15*

Who isn't tired of battling algae!

Caused by excess fish waste and dead organics from leaves or previous algae blooms combined with excessive spring- and summertime sunlight, all

that garish green growth looks horrible, ruins your water quality, and creates a headache for you and your fish.

Is an ultraviolet clarifier, like The Pond Guy®PowerUV™ Clarifiers or the AllClear™PLUS Pressurized Filter the answer? It depends on the type of algae you're trying to destroy.

### Know Your Algae

The algae that forms in your pond comes in two basic flavors: planktonic and filamentous.

- **Planktonic algae**, the source of pea soup algae blooms, are floating, microscopic plants that color pond water shades of green, blue-green, brown or variations in between. In controlled amounts, this type of algae can actually be beneficial. It's considered the start of the pond food chain as the

# Easy water feature

*The Pond Guy 5-9-15*

Mom has been bitten by the water gardening bug but she needs something that is easy to maintain.

Thanks to all the



options available to budding pond hobbyists, she doesn't need to install a maintenance-heavy feature. She can find a simple-to-use one that's ideal for a small yard, patio or tabletop.

It's easy to help her choose the perfect water feature. Simply ask her these questions:

## 1: Does She Want to Keep Fish?

If so, she'll need a water feature that has a pond to house fish as well as a filtration system to keep their water clean – and the AllClear™ Ecosystem Pond Kits are designed for hobbyists who want just that. They come in several sizes, but the 6-foot-by-11-foot kit creates a pond that's about 700 gallons, which is large enough for a few fish and a small waterfall. It includes fish-safe pond liner and underlayment, a pressurized filter, a waterfall filter, pump, tubing, waterfall foam, installation hardware and 12 packets of Nature's Defense. All she'll need is a little help digging the hole in her yard!

## 2: Does She Want a Waterfall but No Fish?

If a waterfall is her main wish, she won't need to get dirty digging a pond. She can try something self-contained, like the Atlantic™ Colorfalls Basin Kit and Colorfalls Lighted Waterfall Weir. Basin Kits come in three sizes – 12 inches, 24 inches and 36 inches – and includes a Colorfalls Basin reservoir, a TidalWave 2 pump, splash mat, auto fill valve and installation kit. She can add some aquatic plants and choose a waterfall color for nighttime viewing. And talk about low maintenance: There's no filtration system to worry about. Easy peasy!

## 3: Does She Just Want the Sound of Bubbling Water?

If she's simply after the soothing sound of bubbling water, suggest something more decorative, like the Atlantic™ Color Changing Vase Fountain and Basin Kit. Available individually in several sizes or as a set, the polyethylene vases in this water feature come alive with color and light as water bubbles from the top. The kit includes a color-changing vase fountain, fountain basin, a plumbing kit, auto fill valve, pump and remote control to turn on the light display. This simple-to-operate feature becomes quite a show-stopper at night!

These easy-maintenance water features will transform your mom's yard or patio into a relaxing oasis that she'll love. But be warned: Once the water gardening bug bites, she'll be hooked – and asking for a larger pond in no time!

## Is Your Pond a Good Home for Koi?

*Reprinted from 3-11-06 Splash*

Pond owners love adding fish to their pond and the colorful and playful Koi is certainly a favorite! They are not

suited for every pond, though. Their mature size of 2 1/2 - 3 feet dictates that they have some space and filtration requirements that surpass those of goldfish!

Koi need at least 750 gallons per fish and a minimum pond size of 1000 gallons. The pond must have a good filtration system (bigger fish=bigger poop) otherwise the water quality and fish health will suffer.

Koi live a long time (25 years on average in a garden pond if well cared for) and need the commitment of their owners like any other pet to keep them healthy!

Koi will reward you with exceptional tameness - they will easily learn to eat out of your hand and will greet you when stepping up to the pond and their spectacular colors and patterns are certainly nothing short of wonderful!

## To salt or not to salt

*The Pond Guy 5-2-15*

It's a question hotly debated by koi hobbyists. When used in low doses, salt has many health benefits for your fish – but when

used in too-high doses, it can do more harm than good. Here's what you need to know about adding salt to your pond.

### Benefits Aplenty

Salt isn't just for helping to heal sick fish. Constant exposure to low salt levels can improve your fishes' overall health. It can improve gill function and oxygen uptake, reduce stress, and build a stout slime coat that'll help them ward off parasites, bacteria and disease. Salt also adds beneficial electrolytes to the water.

### The Right Type

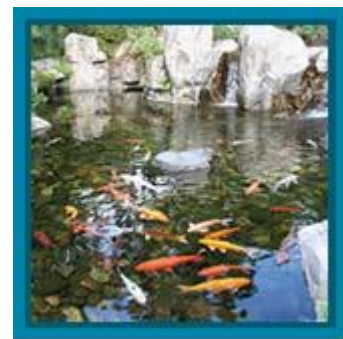
You can't, however, just dump a scoop of common salt, like tasty table salt or ice-melting rock salt, into the water. Fish friendly Pond Logic® Pond Salt is made from pure evaporated sea salt – and that's it. It contains no iodine, chloride or other harsh chemicals that could harm your fish.

### Just Add Salt

If you're adding low doses of salt to your pond and have no aquatic plants, use 2½ cups of salt per 100 gallons of water and disperse the pond salt evenly around the shoreline. Salt will not evaporate or get filtered out, so the only time you need to add more salt is when you do water changes.

### Mind the Plants

If you have lilies and other aquatic plants living with the fish in your water garden, use 1¼ cups of salt per 100 gallons of water. Scatter it around the shoreline, being careful to avoid direct contact with your greenery



**See Salt Therapy on Page 4**



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

**June 24 Note change Fish Fry at WMP**  
June 27-28 Topeka Pond Tour  
July 15 Monthly Meeting  
August 19 Monthly Meeting  
September 16 Monthly Meeting  
October 4 Apple Fest  
October 21 Monthly Meeting  
November 18 Pot Luck

.....  
**Salt Therapy**

Fish with parasites or bacterial infections can benefit from a salt bath. Prepare an isolation tank with 5 cups of salt per 100 gallons of pond water (not tap water) and add some vigorous aeration. Place the patient in the tank for 5 to 10 minutes, and then return it to the pond.

Try adding some salt to your pond today. Your fish will thank you for the spa treatment!

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
4-15, 5-15 or 6-15**

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

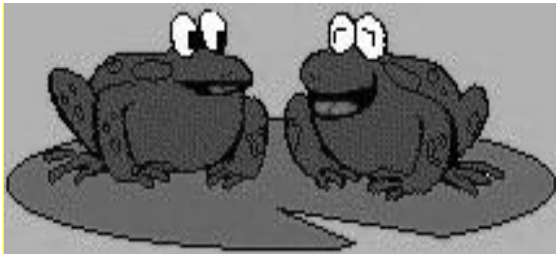
Send dues to  
**Jim Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605**

**THE TOPEKA AREA  
WATER GARDEN SOCIETY**

**2015 OFFICERS:**

Tom Platis Topeka	President 785-478-9514
Chris Newell Topeka	Vice President 785-633-4854
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, 66605



**Check it out - [www.tawgs.org](http://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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