



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 4

May 1, 2015



Dividing aquatic plants

The Pond Guy 4-4-15

After a long, cold winter, you're probably ready to put your green thumb to work in your pond – and digging into your aquatic plants is a great place to start. Your potted bog plants and water lilies will need to be divided, but how you do so will depend on the type of plants you're dealing with. In general, your bog plants will need to be divided every one to two years, and your water lilies will need to be divided every two to three years.

Below, we've included some simplified step-by-step instructions for how to do it. So pull out your waders, pruning tools, extra plant baskets, planting media and garden hose – and let's get to work!

Dividing Bog Plants

Bog plants include species like corkscrew rush, dwarf cattails and irises. Some have clumping roots, some have runners and some have rhizomes. Regardless of the type of root mass, here's what to do with them:

- **Step 1:** First, lift the pot or container out of the pond and gently remove the root mass.
- **Step 2:** Using your garden hose, wash the soil off of the mass and trim away any dead leaves and foliage.
- **Step 3:** Divide the root mass depending on the type of root system. For plants with clumping roots like corkscrew rush, separate the roots into sections, leaving some roots intact with each section. For plants that divide by runners like dwarf cattails, cut the runner root and leave the root base with each section of the plant. And for plants that are rhizomes like irises, simply divide

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m.
May 20, 2015
Historic Old Prairie Town, 124 NW Fillmore
Speaker
To be announced

them into sections.

- **Step 4:** Replant each section of plant in its own container and dispose of any plant overgrowth.

Dividing Water Lilies

Water lilies – both tropical and the hardy – are also relatively easy to divide. You'll know it's time to separate them when you notice fewer pads, reduced blooms or splitting pots.

- **Step 1:** First, lift the pot or container out of the pond, locate the tuber and gently remove it.
- **Step 2:** Rinse off the soil, and trim away root growth and old foliage.
- **Step 3:** Identify the crowns, or the little buds where a new lily pad group will sprout, and cut between them with a sharp knife. Keep the pieces 3 to 4 inches in length. Each one of these will become a new water lily plant.
- **Step 4:** Using aquatic planting media, plant each section separately at a 45-degree angle so that the growing tip is still exposed above the soil.
- **Step 5:** Place your repotted lilies in a shallow area of your pond where only a few inches of water cover the plants.
- **Step 6:** Once new growth appears, move the lilies to the deeper areas of your pond.

Fertilize and Tend

Once you've divided and replanted your aquatic plants, don't forget to give them regular doses of fertilizer to ensure they're getting the nutrients they need to thrive and produce vigorous blooms. And keep your colorful beauties looking good by keeping them trimmed and

regularly removing dead foliage throughout the growing season.

TAWGS Minutes 4-15-15

Vice President Chris Newell called the meeting to order due to absence of President Tom Platis.

An attempt to contact the President of Topeka Beautification was made to address the possibility of combining the garden and pond tours as one, but no return contact was made. It was decided to have the pond tour on the last weekend of June as it has been in the past. Jim Green made a motion to hold the pond tour on June 27 and 28, the motion was seconded by Don Taliaferro. Motion carried. The hours will be 9:00 to 4:00 on June 27 and 12:00 to 4:00 on June 28. Don T. reported there are 4 to 6 ponds that are possibilities for the tour. Chris N. said he could make flyers and notices for the tour. Suggestions were made to use different medias for getting word out about our pond tour, such as , Wednesday Extra in Capitol Journal, radio, etc. It was suggested that a big push be made at next years Kansas Garden Show for folks who would like to have their ponds on the tour.

Don Taliaferro made a motion to approve the minutes from March 2015 as published in the Lilypad. Jim Green seconded this motion. Motioned carried.

No treasurer's report was given due to absence of treasurer Jim Mowder. Report was emailed to secretary Sherry Reed but was not retrieved in time to report at the meeting.

Chris N. has created a new membership list and Sandy Rieger will begin to make contact with those who have not active for a while to gain some insight at what might be helpful to peak their interest in TAWGS again. It was also suggested to make contact with organizations that TAWGS has built ponds for (i.e., VA. Midland Hospice House, Wildlife and Parks, etc.) to see if they need any help and invite them to one of our meetings. A membership drive could be a possibility using the VISTA program which could generate postcards minimal fee.

Chris had talked to ADAPA storage facility about trading storage for a water feature but they are not interested in doing that at this time.

Sherry R. will send thank you notes to Dennis Lowry for birdhouses used at Kansas Garden Show and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Desch for donating fish used in ponds at the VA, Parks and Wildlife and Ward Meade.

Ward Meade will have volunteer opportunities every Tuesday from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m . Don T. volunteered Bob Saathoff to collect volunteer hours for TAWGS members to be turned in to volunteer coordinator.

Don Taliaferro made a motion to adjourn. Remaining six attendees seconded this motion.

Sherry Reed, Sec.

Fun Pond Fact

Ever wonder what happens to the pond salt we put in the water in the summer - and it magically seems to disappear by next spring? When water freezes the salt molecules dissipate! Eskimos used that process to get fresh drinking water! (So, check your salt levels this spring - chances are you will have to add some.



No time for a spring pond cleanout?

The Pond Guy 4-15

An annual spring cleanout is an important chore when you own a backyard pond.

It's when you remove all the decaying organics that collected over the winter, trim back dead foliage, kick on your filtration and aeration systems, and generally spruce things up around your water garden wonderland.

But what if your pond was well-sheltered and protected from leaves and debris, or you live in a temperate climate where a total pond shutdown was unnecessary? Or what if you simply don't have time to dedicate to all that cleaning and maintenance?

Well we have some shortcuts for you. Though it may be better in the long run to do a thorough cleanout at the start of the season, these five tips will cut down the time it takes to do your spring chores.

1. **Do a Partial Water Change:** To help remove some floating and suspended debris, do a partial water change. Let 10 to 20 percent of your water drain from the pond, and add fresh water along with some Pond Logic® Stress Reducer PLUS to remove heavy metals and prevent your fish from getting too stressed.
2. **Add Some Shine:** Oxy-Lift™ Defense® will quickly shine up your waterfalls and shoreline rocks. It's simple to use: As you're doing your partial water change, sprinkle Oxy-Lift™ Defense® on scum-covered rocks, streams and liner before you refill your pond. In just 24 hours, you'll see the gunk break free with no scrubbing at all!
3. **Vacuum Debris:** Use your ClearVac™ Pond Vacuum to easily suck up gunk, sludge and decaying organics on the pond bottom. It has four different attachments – gravel, string algae, narrow and wide – along with extension tubes, so you can vacuum almost any surface. For debris larger than 3/8 inch, simply pull out your Collapsible Skimmer and Fish Net and scoop it out.
4. **Add Seasonal Defense®:** To break down debris that your pond vacuum missed, add some Seasonal Defense® beneficial bacteria to the water. The microorganisms, which are designed to work in cooler temperatures, will break down leaves and sediment that have collected over the winter. It also kick-starts your pond's biological filtration system, priming it for summer.
5. **Rinse Your Filter Media:** Finally, remove your filter media and give it quick rinse with your garden

hose to break up and wash away any accumulated gunk. No need to scrub it too thoroughly; the bacteria living in the pads or BioBalls™ will come back to life once temperatures rise.

Of course, for a truly healthy pond, we still recommend a complete cleanout. But for now, this quick fix will get the debris out of your pond, giving it a facelift for spring soirees.

Skimmer rock looks fake

The Pond Guy 4-11-15

Now that spring has finally sprung, water garden



aficionados are heading out to their yards to do some wintertime damage control, spruce up the surroundings and enjoy the beginning of pond season. It's also a time when unnatural eyesores – like your obviously fake-rock skimmer cover, clunky pressure filter and boxy waterfall filter – take center stage.

We suggest you turn to Mother Nature for inspiration. Here are a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- **Camouflage with Tall Cover:** Bushy or taller bog plants, like dwarf bamboo or dwarf umbrella palms, will provide lush, green camouflage around your skimmer in no time at all. These quick-growing species grow up to 2 feet tall, add texture and interest to your landscape, and naturally filter the water. Plus, they make a perfect habitat for dragonflies, frogs and other pond critters.
- **Position Plants in Planters:** Another option is to plant some aquatic or terrestrial plants in small, movable planters, and position them on and around your skimmer. Go with blossoming perennials for pops of color or plants with dramatic foliage, like variegated taro or silk stockings arrowhead. Here's a pro tip for you: Place water hyacinth right in the waterfall filter to hide the hardware and add filtration.
- **Choose Realistic-Looking Synthetic Rock:** You can also replace your unrealistic rock cover with a more realistic one, like TrueRock™ Boulder and Flat Covers. These faux hand-painted rocks, which come in a range of sizes and shapes, are made with fiberglass construction, making them rugged yet lightweight. Whether you use them to hide your skimmer, waterfall or pressure filter, they blend right into your pondscape.

When you're considering ways to hide your pond equipment, remember that easy access is critical. Make sure you can get to your skimmer and filters for regular cleaning and repair. Other than that, have fun with it! Tap into your inner landscape designer and create a water garden oasis that you'll enjoy all season long.

Spectacular! Colorful! Tame!

Koi are a great pond fish for larger garden ponds! Each Koi needs at least 250 to 350 gallons of water due to their mature size. Nothing looks quite as majestic as a mature Koi (with a length of 2 to 3 feet) seeming to float through the water.

Koi can be tamed to eat out of your hand and will recognize their owners quite readily. Koi live a long time...in well maintained Koi Ponds a life span of 25 years is average...but longer life spans are not unheard of. But Koi **MUST** have adequate filtration, very good water quality and plenty of oxygen, especially during hot spells.

Nutrition is also very important. Koi grow fast and benefit from growth food and vitamin supplements. Their colors will intensify and literally shine if fed a good quality diet.

Beneficial bacteria additions are a must, to deal with the waste these wonderful fish produce, otherwise the pond bottom will accumulate a thick layer of "sludge" that acts like a compost pile to feed algae.

Beneficial bacteria in filter

What lurks in the pores of your filter pad, in the "gunk" at the bottom of the filter container, in the multitude of holes in your bio material? Beneficial bacteria!

These tiny critters are critical to the health of your Pond! The more of them the better!

It is important that the filter material never be cleaned with chlorinated tap water, the chlorine will KILL them! (I keep a bucket hidden behind the waterfall and just dip some water out of the pond to clean the filter pads).

The beneficial bacteria convert the toxic fish waste into harmless fertilizer that can be taken up by the plants (that is it in a nutshell - the actual process is a bit more complicated than that). If enough beneficial bacteria are not present your fish will get ill and possibly die.

Sometimes the filter and pond do not have a large enough colony to quickly convert the poisons (this is particularly true in early spring and if large numbers of fish are added at once) and the ammonia levels in the pond can spike quickly.

Beneficial bacteria reproduce and grow best if the pH is within acceptable range (6.8 - 7.4) and the water temperature is above 45 degrees.

It is a good idea to "seed" the pond with an initial dose of live bacteria in the spring to get things moving in the right direction! **See Bacteria on page 4**

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

May 20	Monthly Meeting
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

Bacteria continued from page 3

Beneficial bacteria is also very helpful in keeping the water clear!

Pond Tip

Goldfish and koi normally spawn in the warming water of spring. If you want to help ensure survival of some of the baby fish, provide a place for the eggs as well as fry (baby fish) to hide from the larger fish. This can be the roots of plants like Water Hyacinth, or a soft filter material. Caution: too many fish can lead to poor water quality.

Your Dues are Due if your label reads 4-15, 5-15 or anytime in 2014

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

Send dues to

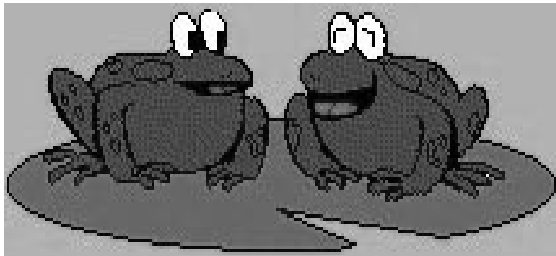
Jim Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605

**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

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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
408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436
785-364-3046

fdgruver@embarqmail.com

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