

# *The Lily Pad*

*The Topeka Area Water Garden Society*

Published Monthly – February to November

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*Donnis and Gerald Hodges share their beautiful pond on the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Topeka Pond Tour in June.*

## **Pond Tour successful**

*By Diane Gruver*

"The best ever!" was one of the comments that Julie Riggles at Puddles and Pads said she heard about the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Topeka Pond Tour, June 22 – 23.

Even though we tried to beat the heat by moving the tour to June, it was still hot and humid. The heat didn't seem to hurt the enthusiasm or attendance for the tour though as early estimations of the ticket sales indicate that we sold just under 700 tickets. A last minute plea for volunteers to mark tickets at the ponds was answered and 31 people stepped forward to help us out after the newspaper published the addresses in the newspaper. Eight of the ten ponds on the tour were member ponds so those 16 members, along with help from their families, also put in long hours the two days.

Many thanks goes to the pond hosts, Juan & Karin Sexton, Keith & Lynn Pelton, Gerald & Donnis Hodges, Dan & Carol Neill, Bob & Cheryl Saathoff, Don & Debby Adams, Becky & Bob Coffman and Dean and Randy DeMoss. (I hope you'll all be on the Member Tours this year so Floyd and I can see your ponds since we both worked all the shifts and didn't get to go on the tour.)

Thanks goes also to the volunteers, some who worked two or three shifts, including: Marion Killinsworth, Doug & Marikay Peterman, Joe Weir and Trudy O'Shea-Weir, Ron Woodbury, Walt & Jeannie

## **Monthly Meeting**

7:00 p.m., Wed., July 17, 2002

Ward Meade Park

**David Puff**

Proper Coverage

Miller, Hi Stockwell, Mike Bradley, Janet & Mike Cool, Stan & Mary Bechtold, Pat & Dick Rokey, Debbie Duncan, Earlene & Dale Jirik, John & Mary Pat Fischer, Jim Green, Tom & Helen Platis, Betty Karns, Linda Willis, Stan & Susan Welch, and Joe Breitenstein.

And last, but not least, I want to thank the committee who worked hard for several months to put things together. These members include: Becky Coffman, Mary Bechtold, Gerald & Donnis Hodges, Trudy O'Shea-Weir, Jim Green, Pat Rokey, Trina Wood, Jon Fischer and hubby and co-chairman, Floyd Gruver.

## **From the president**

*By Mary Ann Bechtold*

A big thank you to Floyd and Diane Gruver and their committee for a very successful pond tour. The host and hostess at each home made a big difference and were appreciated by the pond tour homes. Diane and Floyd will have a detailed report for us at the July meeting.

Please note that we are asking for a head count at the next meeting for our Members Only Pond Tour July 21st. It will start at 1:00 p.m. at Peterman's and end with a pot luck supper. Plan to call someone and carpool. It makes the trip more fun. The club will have a Member Only Pond Tour for the next four months. Plan to join us.

TWAGS is compiling a list of where the club property is being stored. If you cannot make next month's meeting, please let me know what you have.

August 5th (Monday) at 9 a.m. we will host the Topeka Garden Council meeting. Joe Breitenstein and I need some help with this venture. Please don't let us down. We need refreshments as well as servers. Call either Joe (266-6618) or Mary Ann (267-1611).

Thanks to all who help make TAWGS a great club and my job fun.

## Minutes of TAWGS June 19, 2002 Meeting

President Mary Ann Bechtold opened the June meeting with self-introductions. We had three guests, including Mary Robinson and Michael & Lori Meyers. Eric Wood presented an informative program on streambed plants after which we took a brief break for refreshments, which were provided by Arlene Webb.

Diane Gruver reviewed the upcoming pond tour and said that the newspaper had mistakenly published the address of the ponds in the paper so we would have to have volunteers at each pond to mark tickets. A list was passed around for volunteers to sign up. She said that Channel 49 had done a live report on Monday, June 17 at Ken Ketter's pond. Eric and Diane were on the segment. There will also be a short segment on Channel 13 at noon on Thursday June 20<sup>th</sup>. Ads are running on both Channel 13 and 49 and there were ads in the Topeka Capitol Journal. Donnis Hodges made 12 flags to be used for each pond location and Floyd Gruver made the flagpoles. Bob and Becky Coffman put the grommets in the flags. She invited everyone to the reception for the pond tour hosts at Puddles and Pads on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes so they stood approved as published in the June Lily Pad. Treasurer Tom Platis reported that the club has a total of \$3,640.47, including \$1,506.54 in checking, \$2,090.49 in a money market and \$43.34 in petty cash. He said that anyone who wants to see a more detailed report could check with him.

Joe Breitenstein said the June program at the Garden Council was on clematis. He said that new signs have been installed at Ward Meade Park which say that no one under 14 with out their parents can be in the park and no bikes are allowed. Bike racks have been placed outside the gate. There will be a flower show at the Expo Center during the fair on July 27. He needs 6 – 8 people to help set up tables the night before at about 6:30 or 7. TAWGS is responsible for refreshments at the August 5<sup>th</sup> Garden Council meeting and Joe would appreciate help with treats and serving. Treats can be dropped off at Joe's house (2012 SW 30<sup>th</sup>) on Sunday if you can't bring them to Ward Meade Park before 9:00 a.m. Monday morning. Joe's phone is 266-6618 if you need to call him. Joe also reported that he has a key to the Garden Council library in the Preston Hale Room if anyone wants to check out any garden books.

The Topeka Beautification Garden Tour will be June 29<sup>th</sup>.

TAWGS equipment for the maintenance of the fountain was discussed and Eric said he thought that the skimmer and fertilizer tabs were probably at Puddles N-Pads. People in charge of the maintenance in June are Hi Stockwell, Michael Bradley, and Dean Demoss. Bob Saathoff said that his name had been left off the list for July.

The SW Members Only Pond Tour on July 21<sup>st</sup> was discussed. Members will meet at 1:00 p.m. at

Peterman's, 7225 SW Marian RD and caravan to the ponds. A potluck will be held at Taliaferro's at 3119 SW Arrowhead RD to complete the tour. People should bring food, lawn chairs and bug spray.

Earlene Jirik said that the Ward Meade Garden Club is sponsoring a bus tour to God's Garden at Solomon on July 27<sup>th</sup>. They will also stop at the Russell Stover candy factory in Abilene and have dinner at Brooksville. Cost is \$35. If anyone wants to go, reservations need to be made soon. You can call her at 266-5492.

Under Old Business we discussed the TAWGS inventory and the need to find out where things are stored. David Puff has the banner, storyboards and lattice used for the Lawn and Garden Show. Puddles N Pads has the pond tour signs and flags. If others have things belonging to TAWGS please let President Mary Ann know.

It was suggested that we take the TAWGS brochure/membership application to various nurseries, but we finally decided that most of them didn't have room to display them anyway so it was probably not worth the expense.

President Mary Ann reported that the officers met prior to the meeting to discuss several issues. She said that we are trying to handle the more mundane TAWGS business in committees, etc. so that there will be more time for the members to visit and socialize at the meetings.

### Recommendations:

1. Record keeping - Joe suggested at the time of the audit that bills be presented to the treasurer on a letter size sheet so that they can be kept in a notebook more efficiently. The officers recommended that people try to follow that guideline when submitting bills. Joe also suggested that a more detailed treasurers report be provided. Since the newsletter is published on the web the officers recommended that a detailed account be provided at a member's request.
2. Greeters – The officers felt that we need someone to be an official greeter at the door since we are usually busy with TAWGS business matters. Stan Bechtold moved and David Puff seconded that the people providing refreshments be the greeters for the evening. Motion carried.

Helen Platis, who has been the historian in charge of the scrapbook since TAWGS was organized, asked to be relieved of her duties. Arlene Webb volunteered to take over the scrapbook. Thanks Helen for your years of working on the scrapbook. And Thanks Arlene for jumping right in and volunteering

Joe Breitenstein reported that the landscaping at Midland Hospice looks very nice and Ruth Puff said that the patients are really enjoying the pond and feeding the fish.

Bob and Cheryl Saathoff and David and Ruth Puff volunteered to bring refreshments next month. Floyd

Gruver won the water canna that was provided for a door prize by Joe Breitenstein. Meeting adjourned.

## Naturalizing stream beds

By Diane Gruver

"Naturalizing a stream is very important," Eric Wood told TAWGS members in his talk about streambed plants at the June meeting. "A stream looks harsh without any plants," he said. "Try to make the stream look natural by tucking plants in it. Create some pockets – take the dirt off the plant's roots and plant it directly in the streambed. You can place a rock ahead of the current to give it a little protection."

Using slides to show the variety of plants suitable for streambeds, Eric said there are lots of plants available, although not every plant is suitable for every situation. The plant will tell you very quickly if it's going to adapt to the situation.

Some plants that work well in streambeds are water clover, iris, watercress, Siberian pink cups, water willow and creeping jenny. Some plants can be very invasive and can even dam up water so you need to be careful.

Variiegated sweet flag is a semi evergreen and is very hardy. Japanese iris also works well but they don't want to be submerged; they only like wet feet. You can mix different iris varieties to extend the bloom period and they can take partial shade.

Fresh mint is a nitrogen fixer. It grows aggressively and is very invasive. Yellow monkey flower has little yellow flowers and is a good ground cover. European brooklime likes running water and is a good filter. Water primrose has large flowers and can take either sun or shade. It is very aggressive and sends out runners. Flamingo water celery grows well in streambeds and can take either sun or shade. It gets taller in a pond than it does in a stream. Spike rush doesn't like heavy running water. Creeping jenny comes in the standard green and a golden color, which prefers shade. It will winter over if the water is running, but will die if the roots are dry. Copper leaf is a pretty deep burgundy and is a tropical so it won't winter over.

Lavender monkey flower works well in shade and likes running water. Parrot feather also works well in the stream or the pond. Lithrum, with pretty purple spikes, takes running water but it has been named a noxious weed and will not be available commercially after the first of the year. Pennywort is an aggressive ground cover.

The main thing with a stream is to naturalize it to make it look natural, Eric said. Put other plants in the landscape around the stream that fit in with the stream. Astible, hosta and day lilies are all good choices of landscaping around the pond. Yucca plants would not look natural in the pond landscape.

There are pros and cons to having a streambed, Eric said. It helps filter the pond because the plants will grab the nutrients and help keep your water clean. But, you will lose more water because of

evaporation with a stream. Birds love to bathe in a streambed but they also carry parasites and snails, which can contaminate your pond. It's a trade off for seeing beautiful birds, Eric said.

A charter member of TAWGS, Eric is co-owner of Puddles-N-Pads Water Gardens.

## Fountain Maintenance List

The following volunteers have said that they would do the maintenance at the fountain at Ward Meade Park.

**July** Tom Weinbeck, Dale Jirik, Dean Demoss, Bob Saathoff

**Aug.** Bob & Becky Coffman, Dick & Pat Rokey, Dean Demoss

**Sept.** Jim Green, David Puff, Gerald Hodges, Dean Demoss

Many thanks to all of you!!

## Understanding pond treatments

by Erik Tate

Reprinted from June 2002 Water Garden News

It's a fact of pond keeping that sometimes you may need to use a pond treatment. One of the first and most important things you need to know prior to adding anything to your pond is the Pond Volume. Unless your pond is a perfect geometric shape with a uniform depth (or you happen to be a mathematician). You will need to use an estimate of average dimensions to calculate the pond volume. The downside to this is it allows a larger margin of error. An exact measurement can be achieved by using a water meter when filling the pond, but these are a little expensive for a one-time use. Perhaps someone in your local pond club has one you could borrow or rent.

There are different kinds of pond treatments:

### 1. Beneficial Bacteria

Packaged bacteria come in many forms and each is engineered to perform a little different than the next. Some of these convert ammonia to nitrites, then nitrites to nitrate, helping the natural nitrification cycle, while others help to break down sludge found in the pond. They are also used to seed new and existing biological filters. Packaged bacteria are natural and safe for plants and fish. If you are unsure of the exact volume of your pond, it is better to err by add too much rather than not enough of these products to the water.

### 2. Dechlorinator

Dechlorinators, as the name would hint, are used to remove chlorine and chloramine from tap water. This is a necessity when filling or adding water to a pond using treated city water. Dechlorinators are also safe to err on the side of over-treatment. In fact, I would recommend this, as a problem could occur if the water is under-treated.

### 3. Algae Treatments

This can be a fairly broad category and is where some mistakes can be made. Many algae treatments are safe for both plants and fish. Others, such as Fountec, are safe for plants but harmful to fish. Some such as Pond Block or Algae Destroyer are safe for fish but will harm many plants. AlgaeFix is a new product that has become very popular. We have received numerous praises for this product. However, we have also heard from two upset customers. They were upset because they did not follow the instructions and consequently killed their fish. One poured the whole bottle in without measuring anything, while the other left his waterfall turned off. While excellent for algae control, AlgaeFix is a chemical and instructions must be followed. It temporarily robs the pond of oxygen, so circulation must be maintained. The use of this product and many other algae treatments should err on the under-treatment side when in doubt.

#### 4. Fish Medications

Another expansive category, we all hope to avoid the use of most of these products. If we maintain a healthy pond and regularly perform water testing, we can prevent many fish health problems and catch others before it is too late. But, there is always the possibility of problems arising. Most fish treatments can be harmful if over-treated. Others like Lymnozyme or MelaFix are much safer. Pond Salt is often used as an antiseptic in ponds. While it would take a lot to hurt your fish, adding too much can affect plant health.

#### 5. Chemistry Adjustments

Products like pH Up and pH Down are often used to get the pH level of the pond to a more desirable level. However, these should be used sparingly, as a sudden change in pH level can be detrimental to fish life. The ideal pH range for goldfish and koi is 6.8 - 7.6, but levels between 6.6 and 8.2 can generally be tolerated without incident. If the pH is not outside of this range, it's usually safer to leave it as is instead of attempting to adjust the levels.

Regardless of what type of treatment you are using and what you are using it for there are two rules that should not be broken:

1. Read and follow all instructions.
2. Measure twice (even the best of us can make an occasional calculation mistake.)

### **What's that on the bottom of my pond**

*by Randall Tate*

*Reprinted from June 2002 Water Garden News*

That, my friend, is what we so affectionately call sludge. Sludge is an accumulation of fish waste, dirt, and partially decayed plant matter. Not only does it look bad but it can also cause problems. The sludge produces gases that can be toxic to fish in high doses. It can harbor parasites and harmful bacteria. It also feeds the algae, making clear water harder to achieve. An ultraviolet sterilizer will give clear water even with sludge but you should still try to get rid of it.

What can I do about it, you ask? You should remove as much as possible.

How can this be accomplished? If you have bottom drains installed in your pond, it is easy to keep the sludge removed. If your pond is situated on the upper side of a sloped yard then you may be able to siphon the sludge from the pond. A Pond Mini-Vac will remove a good bit of the sludge especially when using the silt bag option, but a lot of the sludge may get mixed into suspension in the water. A vacuum made for ponds is the easiest and best way to remove sludge. If your pond contains an excessive amount of sludge and you can't siphon or vacuum this out, you may have to do a total cleaning. This is a last resort since a total cleaning upsets the balance of a pond. If you decide to clean the pond keep as much of the existing clean pond water as possible to add back to the pond after it has been cleaned. A temporary tank must be prepared to hold the fish while cleaning. Also the plants must be kept wet and in the shade. Pump all of the water from the pond keeping as much as possible. Use a shop vac or brush and dustpan to remove the solids. DO NOT USE any cleaners in the pond; only water or water with a little salt added should be used. After the pond has been cleaned pour or pump the old water back into the pond and place the fish and plants in. Add a dechlorinator and slowly add fresh water to finish filling the pond.

Another method of removing sludge is by the regular use of maintenance bacteria. Biological Clarifier, Clarity Max, GreenEx, Microbe-Lift PI and others contain several types of bacteria and enzymes that will consume the sludge and help reduce the quantity of sludge in the pond. These products also reduce the sludge build up in your filters minimizing the cleaning necessary. Bacteria may not be able to totally eliminate the sludge accumulation but it will make a tremendous difference.



### **Questions (and answers) about baby fish**

*Reprinted from 6-22-02 Splash*

#### **How do I know if my fish have spawned?**

Take a look at your females: When they are ready to spawn they are very fat in the midsection, after they spawn they are just as skinny as the males. You can also run your hand along the liner just below the water line, sometimes you can feel the tiny bumps of the eggs attached to it. Lift up your Water Hyacinths, you may see tiny, tiny eggs attached to the roots.

How long will it take for the eggs to hatch?

The eggs hatch by "degree days". That means that the warmer it is the faster the eggs hatch (sometimes in just a few days).

Do I need to feed the baby fish special food?

The babies will take care of themselves in an established pond. They will munch on plants and algae. Generally no special food is needed.

Will my big fish eat the babies?

Yes, they will eat the eggs and the babies. It is important that the babies have lots of plants to hide in. Once they really start looking like little fish the parents stop eating them.

## Programs for 2002

July 17- -David Puff, Puff Water Gardens, Proper Coverage  
Aug. 21 - Jeff Yeckel, River City Koi, Koi/Fish Disease  
Sept. 18 - Cameron Rees – Landscape Design/Plants  
Oct. 16 - Deb Spencer, Water's Edge, Hydraulics  
Nov. 20 - Pot Luck Supper & Social

## The ups and the downs of pH

*Reprinted from 6-22-02 Splash*

We keep revisiting this subject because it is so IMPORTANT!

Nothing in the pond will work right until the pH is in acceptable range, which is between 6.8 - 7.4. Test kits for pH are cheap and easy to use and you could not make a better investment for your pond.

Your plants, your fish and everything else will do MUCH MUCH better if the pH is properly balanced!!! It will help immensely with clearing the water!

## Mosquito season has arrived

*Reprinted from June 2002 Water Garden News*

Mosquito Dunks and Bits aren't just for ponds. City and state health departments from New England to Florida are recommending their use anywhere around the house that standing water may be found. They have proven to be a safe and useful weapon in the fight to control mosquitos. Mosquito Dunks & Mosquito Bits contain *Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis* (BTI), a bacteria that is deadly to mosquito and black fly larvae yet safe for pets (including fish), birds or other wildlife. Mosquito Dunks and Bits can be used in bird baths, ponds, flower pots or anywhere that water accumulates.



## More on baby fish

*Reprinted from 6-11-01 Splash*

How many baby fish hatched in your pond this year?

Often the population in a new pond explodes the first year or two, until the natural predators find the pond (frogs, insect larvae, etc.) and help keep things to a manageable level.

Baby fish are so tiny when they hatch that it is almost impossible for us to see them until they are a couple of weeks old.

They are very good at hiding in the vegetation. This is where they find shelter and sufficient food. They munch on such things as algae and microscopic pond organisms and some pond plants. There is usually no need to worry about feeding the fry until they are big enough to swim fearlessly with the adult fish.

Goldfish are generally born black and turn orange, white or similar colors as they mature.

## Sun or shade ponds

*Reprinted from 6-30-02 Splash*

**What is better: Ponds in shade or pond in sun?**

We get asked this question very often! There is no definite answer one way or the other! Both have advantages and disadvantages:

Ponds in shade: Will have less algae growth, but most plants will not bloom.

Ponds in Sun: May have more problems with algae, but will also produce spectacular blooms on everything from Water Lilies, to Lotus and Marginal Plants!

## Lotus beautiful but short lived



A Lotus bloom lasts only about three days. The spectacular bloom will open the first day, look absolutely stunning the second day, but will start to deteriorate the third day. (Fertilize your Lotus heavily for maximum blooms)

## Pond plant tips and tricks

Water Hyacinths that wither and die are usually an indication of either: fish eating the roots (the roots should be at least 4 - 6 inches long) or: the pH of the water is too high (pH should be between 6.8 - 7.4). If the fish are eating the roots, move some of the plants to a shallow bucket full of water and compost and put into the sun. Let them recuperate and then switch with the ones left in the pond. Adjust the pH if it is too high!

If Water Lilies or Lotus are not blooming continuously, they may need to be fertilized. Water Lilies and Lotus are very heavy feeders and should be fed about every three to four weeks to produce the abundance of blooms we come to expect (of course, they need sufficient sunlight, too - 6 hours or more per day).

Lotus often do not bloom the first year, and Water Lilies should be re-potted every second or third year.

Some tall plants tend to fall over in the slightest breeze. Use a big container and put a heavy rock in the bottom before adding potting media and planting the plant, this will add stability!

The beautiful brown bloom stalks of cattails make wonderful additions to flower arrangements. Spray the bloom stalk with hairspray before adding it to the arrangement (but after removing it from the pond). This will preserve the bloom stalk so it can give months or even years of pleasure!

### Notice

Please be sure to check the date on your mailing label. It will tell you when your dues are due and how much they are. If you are over two months past due, you will be dropped from the newsletter mailing list.

Also, if you would prefer receiving the Lily Pad by e-mail please e-mail the editor at [fdgruver@holtonks.net](mailto:fdgruver@holtonks.net) or [diane@kansasco-op.coop](mailto:diane@kansasco-op.coop). Thanks!

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society  
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## 2002 Calendar of Events

July 13-14	Kansas City Pond Tour
July 17	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
July 21	SW Members Only Pond Tour
July 26	Garden Council Flower Show
August 11	NE Members Only Pond Tour
August 18	Garden City Pond Tour
August 21	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 15	SE Members Only Pond Tour
Sept. 18	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 6	Apple Fest
Oct. 16	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov. 20	TAWGS Monthly Meeting

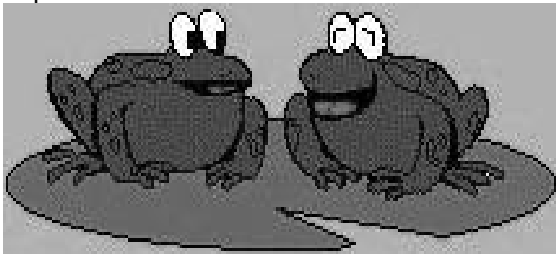


Do not overfeed your fish during hot spells. It is best to feed very lightly if the water temperature is above 80 degrees.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
 5-02, 6-02 or 7-02**  
 Please renew as soon as possible to  
 continue receiving the newsletter.

### THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

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

### *The Lily Pad*

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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 first of each month. Address input and/or questions to:

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