

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

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One of the many beautiful ponds on the KC Pond Tour

Kansas City Pond Tour

A dream come true...

By Diane Gruver

I've wanted to attend the Kansas City Pond Tour for several years and it just never worked that we could go. This year it worked! And man, did we see ponds! Twenty seven in all – a full two days of pond touring. (There were 75 ponds on the tour, but we couldn't quite make it to all of them ☺.) I loved it!

Floyd had to work that Saturday morning but Donniss and Gerald, aka Trapper Hodges and I were at Water's Edge in Lawrence by 8:00 a.m. sharp on Saturday, July 12th to buy our tickets. Trapper sat in the car while Donniss and I went in to get the tickets. Well, those of you who have been to Waters Edge know that you can't just dash in and back out. We oohed and awed and gawked and shopped while Trapper (im)patiently waited. There's lots to look at (they even have a honest-to-goodness real live Victorian water lily) and it takes some time we told him when we finally got back in the car (with a few sacks, plus the tickets of course.) ☺

With Donniss as co-pilot with a map and me as a back seat driver with a map, I'm sure that Trapper was mighty glad for some male reinforcement when Floyd finally joined us about 2:30 Saturday afternoon.

We toured 9 – 5 both Saturday and Sunday and covered many miles (some of them unnecessary because we were lost). We saw big ponds, small

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m., Wed., August 20, 2003

Using pavers in your landscape
Capitol Concrete Products

ponds, sunny ponds, shady ponds, professional ponds and owner-built ponds. Ponds with UV filters, ponds with elaborate bio-filters, ponds with no filters. Each pond was unique and some had ideas that we could come home with. It was great fun!

Over the two days we gathered information about plants including a small tropical water lily with a small fuzzy yellow star-like bloom, a nuphar lily which has a small yellow compact bloom; mosaic plant that looks like a stained glass window, thalia with it's tall single stock flower and beautiful day and night blooming lilies. We saw the result of imaginations that ran rampant including placing a mirror on an easel in your flower garden, giraffes looking over the fence, live peacocks on the roof, misters for the entire back yard, bubblers in pots, rocks and pumps, miniature cities with trains and plants, and so much more that I can't even remember them all.

At first, we tried to rank the ponds but the more we saw the harder it got to pick a favorite. There wasn't a bad one – each was special in it's own way.

In addition to great ponds we ate at some neat restaurants too – Cozy Mels in Overland Park, the Smoke House BBQ on Prospect and J.B. Stouts in Lawrence on the way home Sunday night. Umm, umm good, and reasonable prices too.

It was truly a great weekend and I can't wait to go back next year to see the other 48 ponds!



**Congratulations go to Don
and Ruth Taliaferro and
Doug and Marikay
Peterman!**

Don and Ruth won first place in the Water garden category of the Greater Topeka Landscape Contest. Doug and Marikay won first place in the Sun garden category. Way to go!

Small water features discussed

by Diane Gruver

Becky Coffman gave an interesting program on Water Garden Containers at the July meeting. She said that using containers is a way to have a pond when you don't have room for one, or a way to have more plants and fish than your pond will hold. You can put them near your pond or in other locations in your landscape. They can be buried or sit on a deck or in a flower bed. You can put a liner in a hanging basket and turn it into a mini pond, or you can turn a big flowerpot into a water garden. You should seal a clay or concrete pot with a sealer though so it will hold water and not leach any toxins into the water, especially if you are going to have fish. Whiskey barrels need a liner to hold water and be safe for your fish.

It works best to use plants that don't get too big; miniature water lilies or lotus work well in a container garden. Use some upright plants as well as ones that are on the surface of the water. The nice thing about container water gardening is that you can experiment with different types of plants every year.

If you want aeration, put a small pump in a cup and use a nylon house for a mini filter.

Small fish will do fine in a container if it doesn't get too hot. If you don't have fish to eat the mosquito larvae, you need to use a mosquito dunk to kill the larvae. This is an especially big concern this year with the threat of West Nile virus.

"Containers will need to be torn down for the winter in Kansas," Becky said, "but you can bring them inside and store your tropicals in them." If you have a big pond you can put your hardy plants in it for the winter or store them inside in a basement or garage that doesn't freeze. Becky said she uses shop lights in her basement for her tropicals in containers but be sure to get the container up off the concrete floor because the concrete will conduct the cold. The tropicals need about 14 hours of light per day during the winter.

Becky used books from the library and the web for her information.

"Let your imagination go," she said. "Almost anything will work."

TAWGS minutes, July 16, 2003

Members gathered outside for a short time until Joe Breitenstein was able to obtain a key for us to get into our meeting room. Self introductions were made while waiting and Hi Stockwell presented gift sacks from Michael Bradley to everyone who volunteered to sit at a pond during the pond tour. Diane Gruver presented a solar frog to Becky for her help in pitching in after Diane's boss died in January.

After moving inside, door prizes of sacks of fish food donated by Don Taliaferro were awarded to Kent Hampton and Sheila Thomas. Becky Coffman presented a program about Water Gardening in

Containers.

In the absence of president Tom Platis, VP Becky Coffman called the meeting to order. She congratulated Don and Ruth Taliaferro for winning the best pond in the Greater Topeka Landscape Contest and Marikay and Doug Peterman for winning the best sun garden. Jim Green moved that we approve the minutes from the May Meeting since we didn't have a meeting in June. Bob Coffman seconded it and the motion carried.

Jim Green reported that we had a total of \$2,110.11 in the savings account and \$4,654.05 in the checking account the last of June. Income included some late ticket sales and dues, and expenses included some pond tour expense, liability insurance of \$250 and \$120 for website hosting. The current total balance is \$6,364.16.

Since our bylaws state that bills over \$200 must be approved by the membership, Stan Bechtold moved and Don Taliaferro seconded that we pay the \$250 for our liability insurance. Motion carried.

Becky read a letter from the Shawnee County Extension Office asking for a donation to send kids to camp. The group decided not to contribute because we don't know how much money it will take to build the pond at the Veterans Hospital. She said that the speaker for next month will be from Capitol Concrete Products and it will be about using pavers for patios and other landscaping.

Diane reported on the 2003 Pond Tour and said that she doesn't have an exact total from the treasurer yet but it looks like we made between \$1,500 and \$1,600. She thanked the committee and volunteers and Michael Bradley for giving the gifts to the volunteers. Discussion followed about the problem of having conflicts on the same dates. It was moved by Don Taliaferro and seconded by Mary Bechtold that we have the tour on the 3rd weekend in June. Motion carried. Marikay Peterman then pointed out that the 3rd Sunday is always Fathers Day. Larry Sheets moved and Don Clark seconded that we modify our date after further consideration. Motion carried. We will probably look at the 2nd or 4th weekend in June.

Jim Green reported on the progress at the VA Hospital. He said that he and Doug and Marikay Peterman had checked the site and Doug passed around some photos showing their site selection. Doug said it would probably be a 20 x 25 foot pond and they would need to get bids for the materials. The horticultural therapy clinic will do the digging and electrical work and our members will put in the liner, rocks, etc. Doug said there might be the availability of some limestone rock from a street project on Gage. Doug, Jim, Don Taliaferro and Becky will try to have more information at the next meeting and a tentative date of mid September has been set for building it.

Joe Breitenstein reported that we need to appoint two new volunteers to attend the Garden Council meeting held 9 a.m.-11 a.m. the first Monday of each month. He said that TAWGS will be responsible

for furnishing refreshments for the August 4th meeting and passed a sheet around for people to sign. He also reported that he and Pat & Dick Rokey are working on the landscape at Midland Hospice again this year and that it looks very nice. The lotus and lilies in the pond that we built are blooming nicely.

Dean Demoss reported that he, Michael Bradley and Hi Stockwell have been working on the maintenance of the fountain at Ward Mead Park. They have also done some maintenance on Anna's Pond.

The proposed bylaws were discussed and it was decided that we also needed to make a change on Section 4 of Article VIII, which deals with the petty cash fund. Mary Bechtold moved and Betty Karnes seconded that we accept the proposed bylaws. Motion carried. The bylaws in Article VIII now read:

ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES

- Sec. 1. Only duly authorized officers shall expend the funds of the society.
- A. Expenditures of over \$200 must be approved by the membership.
- Sec. 2. The incoming officers of the society will perform annual audit of the financial records of the society.
- Sec. 3. The Secretary, Treasurer, President or the Vice President must sign all checks
- Sec. 4. A record and receipt of all expenditures shall be maintained.

Diane asked if anyone is interested in a member pond tour this year and several expressed an interest but only three volunteered to be on it: Eberhardt's, Taliaferro's and Peterman's. We need at least two or three more to make the tour a go. Please let one of the officers know if you are interested in sharing your pond. We have tentatively set the date of Sunday afternoon, September 7.

There were no volunteers for refreshments for next month. If you would like to provide refreshments please contact Tom or Helen Platis, 478-9514, or Diane at 233-4085 days.

Meeting adjourned.

Summer maintenance for watergardens

Reprinted from 7-2003 Reflections, WGSKGC

In July, watergarden maintenance transitions from preparation, plant divisions and introductions to taming the wild jungle. Now that the water temperatures are consistently warm, all of the plants kick into active grown mode. The lotus have risen and are producing blooms, the water lilies are blooming like mad, the marginals are reaching full height and the water hyacinth are taking over the surface of the pond.

Now is the time of year where it is a joy to get in the pond to trim and fertilize because the water is such a relief from the hot Midwest summer. When fertilizing, focus on the heavy feeders such as water lilies and lotus. Tropical water lilies can be fertilized twice as often for even more grown and bloom. Don't be afraid to trim heavily on your water lilies and water hyacinth; they will take over if you let them. I like to trim

hardy water lilies into rounded clusters and I usually corral water hyacinth into a corner with tubing or some equivalent. Water hyacinth bloom only when they "feel like it", but when they are crowded, they are more likely to produce blooms. Plant trimmings and algae make excellent compost material. Since there is an abundance of both this time of year, you'd be a fool not to start a compost pile.

Now is also a good time of year to monitor your carbonate hardness (KH) because plants and bacteria are consuming carbonates at a faster rate in warmer months. You will struggle less with algae and high pH if you keep your KH between 130-230 ppm. You will also need to top up the pond more often, so make sure you have a good stock of AquaSafe. You should always use dechlorinator whenever you add water from the tap even if it is just an inch at a time. Heavy metals (which are neutralized by Aqua Safe) can build up and cause problems for fish and plants. My favorite AquaSafe to use for topping ponds is the green bottle; one capful (10mL) treats 50 US gallons.

July is my absolute favorite month to maintain water gardens. It is the month where you can enjoy the fruits of your springtime labor.

Facts about breeding fish

Reprinted from 6-03 Splash

It's that time of the year! With any luck at all there will be baby fish!

Both goldfish and koi scatter their eggs. The eggs are very sticky and will adhere to just about anything. Both goldfish and koi consider the eggs a delicacy and will eat all but the best-hidden ones (which is probably a good thing or we would all end up with thousands of baby fish).

Goldfish eggs hatch by "degree days," which simply means that the warmer the temperatures, the faster the eggs hatch. Goldfish hatchlings are generally black and very, very small. They are extremely difficult to see until they grow a bit. They are about the size of mosquito larvae.

With sufficient food and good water conditions, they grow rapidly and will start turning to the familiar gold color. Some turn gold later than others, but usually this change starts to occur when the babies are about 1 – 2 inches long. Koi babies are a bit larger than goldfish babies and the beginnings of color and pattern can sometimes be seen pretty quickly.

Spawning season often triggers much anxiety in pond owners, because the fish can get very aggressive. The spawning female is often chased and pushed by the male fish mercilessly. There is not much to be done about that, nature must take its course. When a lot of spawning is going on in a pond it can cause a sudden and deadly ammonia/nitrate spike. Be sure to check for these chemicals more often at that time (that goes for frog and toad spawning too.)

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

2003 Calendar of Events

August 20 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 7 Member Pond Tour (Tentative)
Sept. 17 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 15 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov. 19 TAWGS Monthly Meeting

2004

Apr. 10 – 21 Binkley Tulip Days

Pond Tip

If you have trouble with floating fish food or plants being pulled into the skimmer try using a fish feeder ring. You can make one out of plastic tubing formed into a circle and connected with a plastic tube coupler from a hardware store. Your hyacinths will bloom better too!

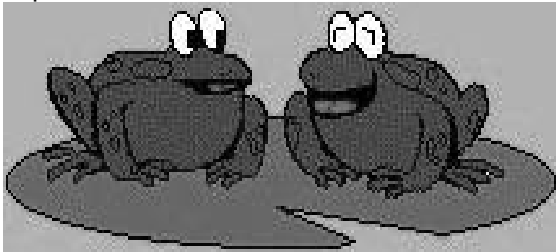


Your Dues are Due if your label reads
6-03, 7-03 or 8-03

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

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

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Becky Coffman Topeka	Vice President 785-272-6568
Diane Gruver Holton	Secretary 785-364-3046
Jim Green Topeka	Treasurer 785-272-7139



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 last 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.