

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

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July 1, 2003



David Puff expresses thanks to everyone at the dedication of the fountain at Ward Meade Park. From left – David, Tom Platis, Ruth Puff, granddaughter Lori and a niece.

Dedication honors David Puff

Almost 100 friends and family of David Puff gathered at Ward Meade Park on June 18th for the dedication and renaming of the "David Puff Fountain." The celebration was in recognition of all the hard work that David has done to start and help the Topeka Area Water Garden Society since our beginning in 1998, and assist Ward Meade Park with the fountain and other park activities.

In addition to David, other honored guests present were David's wife Ruth, their parents, their daughter Dawn (who is working at Puff Water Gardens), two grandchildren, David's brothers and sister and other family members. Also attending were staff of the Topeka Parks and Recreation department and Ward Meade and area garden club and TAWGS members.

Master of ceremonies and TAWGS president Tom Platis dedicated the pond and expressed his thanks to David for all he's done. He said that we wouldn't even have a water garden society if David hadn't taken the initiative to start it and that David has personally helped a lot of us with our ponds. David has given many hours to further the information, education, promotion and betterment of water gardens in the Topeka area and we all owe him a debt of gratitude.

Following the dedication and unveiling of a

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m., Wed., July 16, 2003

Water Garden Containers
By Becky Coffman & Jeannine Miller

bronze plaque, the evening was spent visiting with David, his family and others in attendance. We are so grateful that David felt well enough after his chemo to attend the event and enjoy the festivities.

Mary Bechtold, Donnis Hodges and Becky Coffman planned a beautiful and bountiful refreshment table, which was enjoyed by all who attended. TAWGS members contributed finger food for the event.

Thanks to David, his family and all who attended. Also to Mary, Donnis, Becky and their husbands, and everyone who contributed in any way to the success of the evening. The weather was perfect and it was a great evening!

There was no official meeting so no minutes were taken. Jim Green submitted a treasurer's report of \$4,431.36 in the treasury. The next meeting will be July 16th and we will vote on the bylaw changes that were proposed at the May meeting. Caryn Sheets, Earlene Jirik and Betty Karnes will furnish the refreshments.



David Puff sends thanks to TAWGS

Thanks so much to everyone involved in the dedication of the fountain at our June meeting. Everything was wonderful and I really enjoyed visiting with everyone. T.A.W.G.S. members have a special place in my heart.

David M. Puff

Mosquito control

Reprinted from 5-03 Water Garden News

Warm weather means active fish, bright beautiful flowers, and relaxing afternoons by the pond. But it also brings mosquitoes. With the concern about the West Nile Virus over the past 3 years, mosquitoes seem to be on everyone's mind.

It is a common misconception of non-pond owners that water gardens breed mosquitoes. We get phone calls on nearly a weekly basis from residents nearby our retail store concerned that all of our ponds are going to mean that they will get infected with the West Nile Virus. But, water gardens are generally not an additional concern for the increase of a mosquito population. This is for two main reasons. One, water gardens contain fish. The fish eat the mosquito larva in the pond. Two, water gardeners are also more likely to know about products like Mosquito Dunks, which kill mosquito larva before they can mature. Mosquito Dunks and Mosquito Bits can be used in ponds with or without fish. They also work great in birdbaths or any other place where water collects. Both Mosquito Dunks and Bits are safe for fish, birds, people, and pets.

The real problem areas for mosquito breeding are the neglected pots, toys, downspouts, etc. Anywhere that water collects is a potential breeding ground for the biting pest, the mosquito. When possible, empty these of water. When this is not an option, we go back to the mosquito Dunk solution.

Saved by a snail!

Bob Sathoff noticed this diamond back water snake in his water garden and was trying to



decide how to capture it when a trap door snail took care of the problem for him. Apparently the snake tried to bite the snail and the snail clamped down on it and held it under water until it drowned.

Bob reports that the snail alive and well and is looking for another snake. Besides eating algae, it's sure another good reason to have trap door snails in your pond! (I put five in our pond this week!)

Understanding pond treatments

by Erik Tate

Reprinted from 6-02 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.)



Flanked by Topeka Chamber Ambassadors in red jackets. (center from left) Marice Kane, Gerald Binkley, Dave Bartels (hidden) and Ted Ensley cut the ribbon dedicating Binkley Gardens.

Binkley Gardens dedicated

A large crowd gathered at noon at the pergola at Lake Shawnee for the dedication of the beautiful Binkley Gardens on June 25th. Threatening clouds spurred the ceremony along but not before John Knight, Shawnee County Parks & Recreation Director explained the progress of the dream of a beautiful garden by the lake by Gerald Binkley. He told a few stories about the determination and dedication of Gerald to see the dream come true. Gerald thanked everyone for their help in the realization of his dream and said this was just the beginning.

Park Supervisor Dave Bartels thanked the donors of time and money (TAWGS gave \$2,500) and said that David Puff of the Topeka Area Water Garden Society had sent him pages and pages of information about water gardens, which were very helpful when he began the design and construction of the garden features. He said that they have completed 3 ½ acres of the garden and will need lots more help and money to complete the total 16 acres. It was noted that the existing parking lot is scheduled to be replaced with a garden, something that usually happens the other way around in this day of age.

Following the ribbon cutting invited guests adjourned to the Garden House for lunch. TAWGS members Helen and Tom Platis, Pat & Dick Rokey, Earlene Jirik, Becky Coffman, Bob Saththoff and Diane Gruver attended the ceremony.

Blessed with baby turtles

By Jeff Hansen

Editor's Note: Jeff is a new member of TAWGS

This spring I had the MOST interesting discovery at my pond - something that I would never think would occur in a backyard pond, happened in mine. Before I get to the revelation, let me give you a little history on my pond.

I began "ponding" back in 1994, when it was just catching on. My initial pond was about 6' x 8' and surrounded by flat limestone. There was minimal landscaping around it and it included a spitting frog. I had goldfish, and in the spring, American toads would visit and create tadpoles.

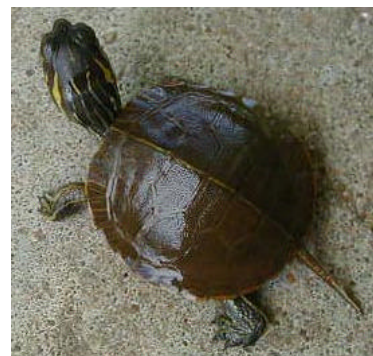
As time went on, I wanted to shift from a fish pond to a frog pond. I always wanted to attract amphibious wildlife. All the literature I consulted recommended not having fish as they would eat the frogs' eggs. I also knew I must create a moist shoreline for the frogs, to make the pond more natural and to create hiding places for them.

Two years ago, I decided to add a marsh to the back side of my current pond. I dug it out, put in the liner and replaced most of the dirt. Then planted marshy plants in the muck, and let things grow. Its dimensions were about 3' x 8'. Still no frogs came.

The following spring, the new liner was leaking (lesson: don't buy cheap liner from mega stores). My old pond was also leaking, so I determined it was time to tear it all out and start over. This time, I decided to create a normal pond area, a marsh area, and a shoreline area. All would have an underlayment of a liner. The deep pond area was in the front, with the marsh being in the back, and the shoreline bordered the back and one side of the pond and marsh. The marsh is about 24 inches deep, with about 18 inches of dirt and the rest water. The shoreline is about 12 inches of dirt mixed with sand setting on top of the liner, and stays moist by absorbing water from the pond and marsh.

This has created ideal habitat for frogs and toads. This spring I had a total of three American toads romping around in my pond/marsh/shoreline aka the wetland complex. Currently I must have about 5,000 or more tadpoles. It's truly amazing.

One day, I was admiring the



pond/marsh/shoreline aka the wetland complex and saw something swimming in the marsh area. It wasn't a fish, and it wasn't a frog or a toad. It swam to the bottom of the marsh. I took a closer look and to my amazement I saw a baby turtle. It was a hatchling painted turtle, not much bigger than a quarter. Within a few days, I noticed two more hatchlings. I determined that a female must have come and laid its eggs in my sandy shoreline and I was blessed with baby turtles.



Jeff Hanson's backyard wetland complex.

From the president

by Tom Platis

It was not too long ago that I was standing out in my back yard with a shovel in my hands. Why I had a shovel in my hand I forget. However, I will never forget what my wife said when she said to me, "Why don't you dig me a water garden?"

So I did. I say I did, but without the help of my wife it would not have been possible. In less than a month I had dug a hole, placed a liner and rocks in and around the hole, and added a pump, stream, waterfall and skimmer to it. The pond is twelve feet by ten feet and a stream of approximately 22 feet.

It was hard work, but I enjoyed every minute of it. The hole took shape and with the added plants and fish, it doesn't look half bad. Since then, we put in a gazebo and rock patio and path. My wife added her touch of statues. We also have a military helmet made to look like a turtle. I'm going to do something else, but I don't know exactly what. It will come to me.

It has been a great experience. But, you know, there is something else that happens that really goes beyond just building and planting a water garden. You meet people you would never have met before. You belong to a water garden club and you meet new people. You socialize with them and share their experiences. You exchange ideas with them and know them a little better.

You know, it's been a real pleasure to have a water garden.



Two streams fall from an upper pond at Chuck and Sharon Tracy's pond.

Pond Tour held in June

by Diane Gruver

A lot of hard work culminated June 21st and 22nd when the 12th Annual Topeka Pond Tour was held. For the most part, the weather was overcast and cooler than some years. Threatening weather discouraged some tour goers on Sunday when we experienced heavy rain and lightening during the morning hours. We competed with several other activities on Saturday but still had a good showing at the 10 beautiful ponds on the tour.

Our preliminary "guesstimate" results are that we sold just under 500 tickets and made a little over \$1,500.

Thanks go to the ten pond hosts, which included TAWGS members Bill & Susan Kraus, Chuck & Sharon Tracy and Ron and Linda Willis. Others hosts were Dawn Downey, Robin & Lorraine Robinson, Robert Champion, Connie Blaser, Jamie & Galen Hawk, Al & Mary Gerstner, and Larry & Gwen Montgomery.

Thanks also goes to the committee members who spent many hours planning the tour. Those members include: Mary Ann & Stan Bechtold, Jim Green, Jon & Mary Pat Fischer, Gerald and Donnis Hodges, Bob and Becky Coffman, Michael Bradley, Jeannine Miller and my hubby Floyd Gruver. A special thanks goes to Becky who helped pick up the ball after my boss died and carried a big share of my load.

It won't be long and the committee will begin work on next year's 13th Annual Topeka Pond Tour. We need to decide if we want to have it in June when it's cooler but there are more things going on, or in July when it's hotter, the ponds are more mature and true ponders are willing to get out to see ponds no matter what the temperature.

Why don't you step up and volunteer for a fun, exciting and worthwhile project. It will give you the opportunity to get better acquainted with lots of fun and interesting ponders. I know you would enjoy it.

Nature's Partner: Water Lily

by Valerie Anderson

Reprinted from June-2003 Reflections, KC Watergardens

"As the rose is to the flower garden, so is the lily to our lakes and ponds." It is said that the water lily "is the unchallenged queen of aquatic plants." Not only is the water lily beautiful, coming in a variety of sizes, colors and spread, but they help keep pond water clean, providing much needed shade, as well as helping the resident fish. There is much good that can be said about the water lily residing in your yard's water garden.

The first noticeable attribute of the water lily is its flowering blooms. The blooming season begins in June and flowers appear in succession until September. The blooms will open in late morning and stay such until later afternoon. Blooms generally last between three to five days. Flowers are usually six inches across, with yellow centers. Blooms can easily have 25 petals or more. As for the leaves, they are smooth and circular. The leaves can be found in greens and green and purple tints. The under stalks which hold the leaves and flowers are flexible, growing up from their rhizome base. Reproduction occurs through growth from the rhizome and seeds.

The Rock and Water Garden Expert by Dr. D.G. Hessayon shares the following information.

"The golden rule is never buy a water lily just because the picture looks nice and it costs less than the others on show. You should measure the size of your pond surface and then aim to buy one or more specimens with an anticipated total spread of no more than half of the pond surface. And never be guided by the price – the ones which are far too vigorous for the average pond actually cost less than the more compact ones, which do not look value for money."

Water lilies are grouped into types: dwarf, small, medium and vigorous. Be sure to thoroughly read the lily description so that you know exactly what type, size, planting depth, spread, and cover you can expect from your investment. Take pleasure in your lilies and all the other residents of your water garden. Have fun and enjoy your journey.

Your pond before and after a storm

Reprinted from June 15, 2001 Splash

It is that time of year for many of you! Hot, muggy days and stormy evenings and nights! Here are some things to watch for with the pond:

- It is very important that the pond has sufficient aeration during hot and muggy days. Water can lose a lot of oxygen content during that type of weather and your fish can actually strangle to death.
- Keep those waterfalls running
- A storm with lots of rain (and possibly hail) can significantly affect the water chemistry in the pond! Check the pH after such a storm and adjust as necessary.
- Do not use chemical fertilizers, herbicides or

pesticides near the pond. These chemicals can wash into the pond during a downpour and put your fish into severe distress or even kill them.

Keep those pond plants blooming!

Reprinted from June 15, 2001 Splash

A pond or water garden will provide a spectacular show all summer long with plants and flowers not seen in the rest of the garden with just a little bit of care:

- Dead-head spent blooms (remove dead blooms). Water Canna, Pickerel Rush, etc. will bloom almost continuously if this little chore is performed regularly.
- Blooming plants should occasionally be fertilized! Use an aquatic fertilizer that is safe for fish!
- Water Lilies and Lotus are especially heavy feeders and will bloom much more and longer if fertilized regularly!

Lilies to give away

TAWGS member Duane Eberhardt reports that he has lilies galore at his pond and is willing to share with whoever would like to have some. Call him at 785-246-0240.

Topping off the pond

Reprinted from 6-28-01 Splash

It is summer-time! Now we often have to add water to the pond to make up for evaporation! A few cautions to keep in mind:

- Do not let the pond get too low before topping off! If fish eggs are present they could be out of water and die. Also, the more water is added at a time the more the chemical composition of the water is changed.
- Always keep extra de-chlorinator on hand! More fish have been killed by the pond owner forgetting the garden hose is on than any other way.
- Check the pH when filling up the pond! This is very important! Adding fresh water on a regular basis will change the composition of the water!
- Fill a little bit every day or every other day rather than a lot once a week! This keeps the pond and the fish healthier and puts less stress on the eco-system.

P. S. Diane's words of wisdom

I had always heard that if you don't top off over 2 inches you didn't need to add dechlorinator, but more recently they are saying that any amount of chlorine will eventually hurt the gills of your fish and over time it will eventually kill them. Use dechlorinator every time!

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

2003 Calendar of Events

July 12-13 Kansas City Pond Tour
July 16 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
August 20 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 17 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 15 TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov. 19 TAWGS Monthly Meeting

2004

Apr. 10 – 21 Binkley Tulip Days

Pond Tip

Reprinted from 6-1-2003 Water Garden Tip of the Week

If you are away from home during the day when most water lilies are blooming, consider a night-blooming water lily to give you some night time enjoyment.

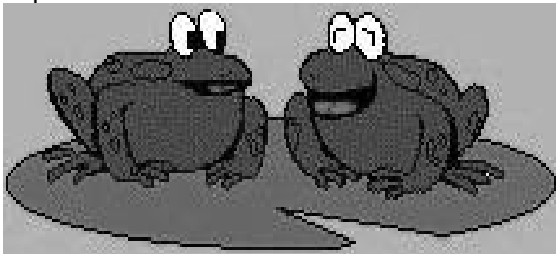


Your Dues are Due if your label reads
5-03, 6-03 or 7-03

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

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

Tom Platis Topeka	President 785-478-9514
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:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor
408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436
785 364-3046 (w) 785-233-4085
fdgruver@holtonks.net

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