

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

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Xeriscape landscaping conserves water

By Diane Gruver

TAWGS members gathered under threatening clouds at the Shawnee Co. Extension Office to learn about Xeriscaping at their June meeting. Master Gardener Pat Shaw explained that the word Xeriscaping came from the Greek word "xeros," meaning dry, and "scape" meaning landscape. Xeriscaping - the conservation of water in our landscape.

Pat said that there are seven basic principles for a Xeriscape landscape:

1. Planning and Design – have a well thought out plan; good drainage is important.
2. Soil analysis and soil improvement – soil testing is the most important thing you can do; good soil is not made in one year. Don't amend the soil for trees.
3. Limited turf areas – grass takes a lot more water than plants. You will need a little grass for pets or children so use a little in your front yard. It is not efficient groundcover.
4. Efficient irrigation – apply water only where and when needed; use ground cover such as ivy, vinca or pachysandra, not turf grass, on hilly areas.
5. Low water-use plants – select appropriate plants.
6. Mulch – use bark, compost, woodchips or chopped leaves with compost or mulch on top. Do not use black plastic.
7. Appropriate maintenance – A Xeriscape landscape is approximately 50% less maintenance. There is nothing that doesn't require some maintenance, however. Pull weeds – don't hoe. Take off the old blooms because most perennials will bloom longer if you deadhead them.

"Nothing really likes to grow in Kansas," Pat said. "Plants get used to hot or cold, but in Kansas it can be hot one day and cold the next."

Following Pat's interesting presentation the group had the opportunity to walk through the Xeriscape garden in front of the extension office before going to Ward Meade for the business meeting.



Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m., Wed., July 21, 2004
Building a bog and plants that go
in a bog

Kip Walker. Puddles-N-Pads

Minutes TAWGS Meeting June 16, 2004

TAWGS Members met at the Xeriscape garden in front of the Shawnee Co. Extension office for an interesting presentation by Master Gardener Pat Shaw. Following the program and a chance to look at the gardens the group went to Ward Meade to continue the business portion of the meeting.

President Tom Platis opened the meeting with self introductions. Dick Rokey moved and Marikay Peterman seconded that the minutes be approved as printed in the Lily Pad. Motion carried. A brief break was taken to enjoy refreshments provided by Carol Gnagy and Becky Coffman. Don Taliaferro and Bob Saathoff volunteered to bring refreshments next month.

During the officer reports, Secretary Diane Gruver reported that the club had received three gift subscriptions to the Water Gardening Magazine for door prizes. One will be given away each month for three months. She also reminded everyone to watch when their dues are due on the label on their newsletter or in their e-mail.

Jim Green gave the treasurer's report saying we have about \$2,700 in the checking account. We still have a few outstanding bills for the pond tour. The plaque for the pond at the veteran's hospital was discussed.

Mary Ann Bechtold, chairman of the 2004 Topeka Pond Tour thanked everyone for their help and input. She said she had 700 tickets printed; they cost \$316 because we did not have a colored cover this year. We have more advertisers this year and we hope that we have a good response to ticket sales. The reception for the pond tour hosts, committee and any TAWGS members that would like to attend will be held Thursday, June 24, 7:00 p.m. at Puddles and Pads. Donnis Hodges volunteered to bring drinks and cookies. Diane also volunteered to bring cookies. Others were encouraged to provide refreshments as well.

Joe Breitenstein thanked Helen Platis, Becky Coffman and Betty Karnes who helped with refreshments

at the June Garden Council meeting. He reported that there has been more vandalism at Anna's Pond and the lower pond has a leak. He also reported that he had spoken with Ruth Puff's Mother-in-law and that Ruth is experiencing serious health problems. We are all sorry to hear of her illness. Diane will send her a card from the group.

Diane reported that she did not have the map drawn for the August 15 member's pond tour yet but will work on it soon. Carol Gnagy offered to have the tour end at their house for the pot luck supper. Be sure to put it on your calendar and plan to attend.

Donnis Hodges won the free subscription to the Water Gardening Magazine. Meeting adjourned.

Enlarging an existing pond

by RANDALL TATE, Chief Manager. *The Water Garden*

Reprinted from June 2004 Water Garden News

After some time in the hobby a lot of us find that our pond is too small. We long for a larger pond with room to add another koi or two or possibly another water lily that you have fallen in love with. Unless you have already filled up your yard with ponds (we haven't figured out yet how to stack them) you can enlarge your water garden.

There are a few different approaches that you can take. You can enlarge your existing pond. You can build another pond nearby that will connect with your existing pond with a stream or waterfall. Another option is to build a pond beside your existing pond and make it look as though it is one pond. I will talk about these three approaches one by one.

You can make your pond larger but this approach is probably the most work. The first step is to make or buy a temporary home for your fish and plants. A kiddie pool is one option. You could also buy a small liner and place some concrete block one or two layers thick in a square or rectangle to maximize the liner size. The block can be simply dry stacked as up to two blocks high will hold the weight of the water easily. Place your plants and fish in this with a small pump to aerate the water while you work on the pond.

To make your pond larger you can splice a piece of liner onto your existing liner or you can remove the old liner and add a new larger liner. Adding a new liner means removing all of the stone and completely rebuilding your pond. Or you could seam a new liner onto your old liner. This method may mean less work but the seam must be made with great care to ensure that it is watertight. Making a seam on a flat surface is not difficult but trying to make a seam going up and down a slope is not easy. Using a piece of lumber temporarily under the liner will help by providing a smooth hard surface to enable you to get the necessary pressure when making the splice. After splicing your liner continue as normal with the construction of the pond.

Adding a pond either uphill or downhill from the first offers an interesting design option. With this method you can have koi in one pond and plants, which the koi might find palatable, in the other. Having

a pond on different levels also offers several areas for viewing the ponds. You can connect these two ponds with a stream and waterfall. Or, if you prefer, you can keep the pumps and filter systems separate and only connect the stream and waterfall to the lower pond and hide the fact that they don't connect with a shrub or stone.

If you like the look of one larger pond but you don't want to go to the trouble of rebuilding your first pond then build a new pond just beside the first. You can use a bridge of lumber or stone to hide the fact that the two ponds are not really one. A bridge adds a great place for viewing the pond and is a great design element for the pond. If you use this method then the ponds will look as one as long as they are constructed on the same level. If you like you can even connect the two using a section of pipe and one or two bulkhead fittings connecting the two ponds. If you use a three-inch pipe and bulkhead some fish can swim back and forth through the bulkheads and one filtration system can be used. If you want to restrict the movement of the fish then you can use a bulkhead screen on the pond side of the bulkhead.

Whatever method you choose remember that those ponds soon fill up with fish and plants so don't make your new addition too small like the first one.

Mosquito control around your ponds

by ERIK TATE, Operations Manager, *The Water Garden*
Reprinted from 6-04 Water Garden News

It's that time again. Everyday newspapers across the country feature articles on the West Nile Virus and disease spreading mosquitoes. Customers call with concerns about their pond and how it may be contributing to the mosquito population (actually it is usually the neighbor of a pond owner that causes the customer to contact us).

It is a common misconception of non-pond owners that water gardens breed mosquitoes. But, water gardens are not an additional concern for the increase of a mosquito population. This is for several reasons.

1. Most water gardens contain fish. The fish eat the mosquito larva in the pond. Mosquito fish can be added to a pond, but koi and goldfish do a good job as well. Mosquito fish can also quickly over-populate a pond.
2. Water gardeners are also more likely to know about products like Microbe Lift's biological Mosquito Control, which kills mosquito larva before they can mature. The Mosquito Control is a liquid so there is no unsightly residue and it can be used in ponds with or without fish and also in birdbaths or any other place where water collects.
3. Water is a natural attractant of dragonflies and damselflies. These creatures are often called Mosquito Hawks. So, if your neighbor complains about your pond because they are concerned you are going to give them the West Nile Virus, point out the dragonflies hovering around your pond and ask them if they are aware that the average dragonfly consumes hundreds of mosquitoes per day. Dragonfly larva also eat mosquito larva. If anything a water garden helps fight against mosquitoes.
4. 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 suggest going back to the biological Mosquito Control solution.

Container gardens are fun

Reprinted from July 02 Water Garden News

Container gardens are perfect for anyone; the apartment dweller without a yard, renters who can not dig a pond in their yard, or even for pond enthusiasts who need a little splash of color to accent an area.

For the beginner who is afraid of getting in over his head with an in-ground pond, the container garden provides a practical, almost maintenance-free approach to water gardening.

A container garden is a fun idea for a child -- he or she can set up her own little ecosystem and watch it grow and develop. This is a perfect summer-long project for children.

A tub garden is the perfect place to keep your fry safe from parent fish before reintroducing them into the pond.

When designing a container garden, the possibilities are endless. Any number of variables can change the appearance of your mini- water garden, like the size and type of container you select, plant selection, type of fountain (optional), etc. Your container garden can be as formal or casual as you like.

Many different containers are available to use as tub gardens: plastic garden tubs, large Chinese goldfish bowls, antique bathtubs, or just about anything you can find that will hold water. A whiskey barrel can be used, but it should be lined with a flexible rubber liner to prevent leeching of tannic acid, which can stain water and harm fish and plants.

You will not need to filter a tub garden, or even re-circulate the water. Most people will choose between keeping either a water lily or a pump with a fountainhead, since water lilies will not perform well if they are splashed with water. However, you can select a small statuary fountain with a small pump, as long as the water lily is not being hit with spray. If you opt for a fountainhead, you can grow shallow water plants but not water lilies in your container garden.

Make sure that you manicure plants every few weeks to help keep your water clean. You will need to keep a couple of bunches of anacharis in your tub to prevent stagnation (in still-water tubs) and algae growth (in all tubs). If you don't keep fish in your tub, you will need to use a mosquito dunk once a month to prevent problems with mosquitoes.

A properly set up and maintained container garden should not require any water changes during the growing season, merely add water as needed due to loss by evaporation.

Some plants that will do well in a tub garden are:

HARDY WATER LILIES; Rose Laydekeri, Laydekeri Fulgens, Walter Pagels, Indiana, Comanche, and Berit Strawn.

TROPICAL WATER LILIES; Panama Pacific, Tina, Golden West, Yellow Dazzler, Green Smoke,

Albert Greenburg.

SHALLOW WATER AND LILY LIKE AQUATICS; Variegated Rush, Knot Grass, Orange Peel Plant, Water Pennywort, Iris, Variegated Clover, Water Mint, Parrots Feather, Floating Hearts, Pickerel, Dwarf Cattail, Siberian Pink Cup, Dw. Umbrella Palm, Dw. Papyrus, Water Poppy, Mosaic Plant, Variegated Water Celery, and Tropical Arrowhead. Lotus, especially dwarf varieties, will perform very well planted in a tub. Many pond owners whose ponds are in a shady area will plant a lotus in a tub and place it in an area that receives plenty of direct sun.

For more information on tub gardens, pick up a copy of Helen Nash's Water Gardening in Containers.

2004 Programs

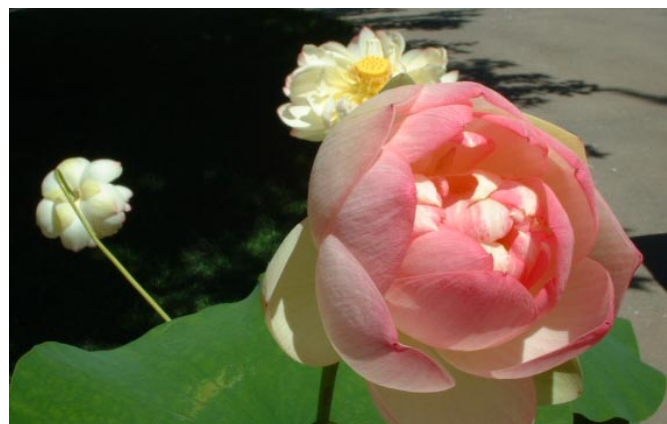
July 21 – Building a bog and plants that go in a bog – Kip Walker, Puddles-N-Pads

Aug 18 – Bring birds into your backyard – Paul Willis, Master Gardener/Audubon Society

Sept. 15 – Closing your pond – Eric Wood, Puddles-N-Pads

Oct. 20 – Different types of plants for your yard – Pat Rokey, Master Gardener

Nov. 17 – Pot Luck Supper – no speaker



Lotus are worth the work

By Diane Gruver

We finally did something right with our lotus! This is the first year that we have had more than two blooms at a time. In fact, it's the first year that we've had more than two blooms. Period!

The bloom in the foreground is the third bloom on our plant in the whiskey barrel, and there is one more waiting in the wings. I think they are so pretty! The first two blooms opened June 21st and the third opened the 23rd. They say that lotus usually don't start blooming around here until around July 4th, but I know that everything has been 10 days to two weeks early this year.

We have had our lotus in a whiskey barrel several years because our pond doesn't get very much sun. It is a bit of a pain because we have to wheel it into the garage every fall and walk around it all winter, but now it seems worth all the work! The lotus was repotted in clay soil and a little sand this year. It was NOT fertilized until a month later.

It must be happy, and I know that I'm happy!

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

Calendar of Events

July 10 – 11	Kansas City Pond Tour
July 21	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Aug. 18	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Sept. 15	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Oct. 20	TAWGS Monthly Meeting
Nov. 17	TAWGS Pot Luck Supper

Water Garden Tip

To prevent a large sludge build-up in your pond, remove dying foliage from plants before it has a chance to fall into the water and decay.

Your Dues are Due if your label reads 6-04 or 7-04

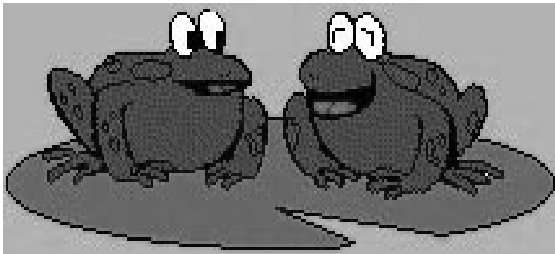
(or anything prior to 5-04)

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

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

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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 third 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.