

Volume 8, Issue 3

The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

April 1, 2005



Wichita Garden Show

By Diane Gruver

"Blue Bayou" was the theme of the Kansas Pond Society's booth at the 2005 Wichita Garden Show. Fitting in with the garden show's theme, "Spring's Rhythm and Blues," the entry in the mid garden size won the People's Choice Award and an award for theme, plant tags and entertainment. The longer you stood and looked at the authentic looking booth the more details you saw. It was pretty neat.

Gardens in the Grand Garden category were all impressive too but not quite up to last year's show in my opinion. Still the overall garden show is still something that I wouldn't want to miss.

Actually, the highlight of the show this year was my chance encounter with Paul James, the Gardener Guy, who I enjoy watching on HGTV. I spotted him, trying to be inconspicuous, as he was looking at exhibits and stopped to chat for a minute. I later stood in line at the Arnold's Greenhouse booth to get his autographed picture. Floyd wasn't impressed so he wandered over to a stone wall to sit while I stood in line. When I realized that people could have their picture taken with Paul I did everything I could think of to get Floyd's attention. I could see him – and he SHOULD have been able to see me as I waved my arms and jumped up and down, but no such luck. Of course his cell phone was off too. I finally asked a nice gentleman in line behind me if he would take my picture, which he did.

If you have never taken the time to go to the show I

Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m., Wed., April 20, 2005

Most common mistakes made and how to correct them
Brad Cheney, A-B-C Ponds & Greens

definitely think it is worth it. It is just hard to describe the huge and impressive displays. The four nationally acclaimed great gardens and eight mid gardens are installed in just six days. The intricate displays are valued at over \$500,000.

Opening your pond

"A total draining and cleaning is a smelly job," Eric Wood said. "It is not exactly fun." How we put our ponds to bed in the fall and take care of it during the rest of the year will determine how much work it will take to open them in the spring. If we trimmed the plants and netted the pond it probably won't be as much work.

Keep the fish population down, maintain good filtration and keep debris out, Eric said, and you can probably go three or four years before doing a thorough cleaning. If there is more than an inch of sludge on the bottom you need to drain and clean the pond. If there is less than an inch, you can probably get by with cleaning the bottom off with a fine net.

Filamentous algae does not mean that you have to clean the whole pond because fish will graze a lot of it out. Koi (carp) graze non-stop; goldfish and shubunkins won't do as well. Don't pull algae out by hand Eric said. That releases strands, which will continue to grow and spread. Use something to contain it or cut it off with a knife. A toilet bowl brush works real well. A UV light will only kill what passes through it, not what is on the rocks, so they are useless in string algae control.

Once the decision has been made to thoroughly clean the pond there are several things you need to have on hand.

1. Tank to move the fish into
2. Pump or air pump to bubble the water in the temporary tank
3. Netting to cover the tank to keep the fish from jumping out
4. Dechlorinator/ammonia remover
5. Pump to drain the pond (P-N-P now rents a cleanout pump for \$30 per day)

6. Bacteria to start up the pond again

In addition, if you use SAB or Pond Balance one to two days before cleaning it will break down the bond and help loosen the algae so you won't have to scrub as much.

Set the pump in a bucket to keep the fish from swimming into it. "Fish naturally want to go towards movement," Eric said. Do not go in the house while the pond is being pumped down. The pump can become clogged or it can pump the pond dry before you know it.

While the pond is draining you can take the filter apart to see if you need to replace the filter pads. A good rule of thumb is to replace the skimmer pads every two to three years; replace the BIOFALLS® filter mats every three to four years; and replace volcanic rock every two years.

"Chasing fish around with a net is stressful for them," Eric said. "Drain the pond to about six inches before netting them." If you have anachris left, take it out and wash it off. Use a shop vac to clean out the bottom of the bio falls and skimmer. A plastic scoop shovel works well to clean out the sludge on the bottom of the pond. Fish emulsion is a wonderful fertilizer, Eric said, so don't throw it away. Put it on the compost pile because it is very fertile material. A word of warning: the liner will be slippery, and footing is very treacherous. Wash the sides down with water after you have removed the sludge. Don't use a cleaner and don't scrub the liner clean. If you make it spotless it will be like starting a new pond.

Start filling the pond with water after you have finished cleaning. Don't dump all of the dechlorinator in all at once. Be sure to acclimate the fish to the new water, Eric said. You can do that by placing them in sacks or buckets to float them for awhile. Place the hose into the skimmer or waterfall to prevent the fish from swimming directly into the fresh water. Don't clean the filters any more than you have to. Leaving one pad dirty will help speed up balancing the pond by a week. Put the middle pad from the bio falls on the bottom without washing it off with tap water. Pour bacteria over the filters. Dry bacteria is cheaper but liquid bacteria has more bacteria and is recommended for spring start-up. Don't return the anachris to the pond until the water has been dechlorinated as it will bleach it out. Check for leaks around the waterfall, the most common area for pond leaks.

Barley straw prohibits growth of string algae, although it won't kill what is already growing. Barley pellets work for about one month; barley bales work for about six months. Pond Balance and SAB also inhibit the growth of string algae. Pond Balance does best in ponds with a high pH. Eco Blast works in shallow water like stream beds but don't use excessively. A new product, Aqua One, has helped dramatically to reduce the growth of string algae. It is also a beneficial maintenance bacteria.

"String algae is a sign of good water quality," Eric said.

Salt is a good product for the pond, but it can kill the plants if too much is used. It buffers pH, breaks down hardness of the water, brings slime coating up on fish and helps them deal with temperature changes Eric said. A good salt product to use is Pond Guardian.

The majority of fish problems occur in the springtime when the fish are coming out of dormancy. Ich and fin rot are easily treatable and there is a medicated food that is easy to use. Do not start feeding fish until the water temperature maintains about 55 degrees and start them out with low temp fish food. You can also feed them plain cheerios, oatmeal and fresh green beans for kio.

Test kits are available but don't over analyze the water quality, Eric said. The ideal range for pH is 6.5 – 8.5.

Concerning plants, Eric said there is narrow window to divide lotus, which are considered the king of the water garden. Late March is the best time to divide them before the growing tips become too brittle and break off. The tubers look like a banana and you need 1 ½ tubers with a good growing tip. Lotus don't need a lot of soil, 2 ½ to 3 inches of soil only. Let the tuber dry for a couple hours before re-potting. Make a shallow furrow in the clay soil to lay the tuber in and put a rock on top of the tuber. Put a little gravel on top. If you have 18" or larger koi use flat rocks instead of gravel. Standard size lotus need to be divided about every three years.

Water lilies are sold in 10 inch pots for convenience but they won't have as many blooms as lilies planted in a 16 or 23 inch pot. To divide a lily take it out of the pot and wash it off. Cut the roots off to about 6 inches long, cut the rhizome to about 6 inches at a 45 degree angle and take off all the growing nodes except one good growing eye. Set the cut edge against the pot with the eye 1 inch above the soil line. Put pea gravel on top of the dirt. Again, use flat rocks if you have large koi. Divide any water plant if the pot is bulging.

Eric is a co-owner of Puddles-N-Pads and a charter member of TAWGS. We're glad to have him back after being on the road for the last year.

TAWGS Minutes March 16, 2005

President Tom Platis called the March 16th meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Self introductions were made with several guests in attendance. Eric Wood gave a very interesting program on Opening Your Pond.

The meeting resumed following delicious refreshments provided by Donnis & Gerald Hodges and Carol Gnaggy. Becky Coffman and Dean Demoss volunteered to bring refreshments in April.

Jim Green moved and Mary Ann Bechtold seconded the minutes be approved as mailed in the March Lily Pad. Motion carried.

Under officers' reports, President Tom commended the Lawn and Garden Booth Committee, saying they did a spectacular job and the booth got first place.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that as of March 16th, the club has \$2,589.54 in savings and \$2,134.52 in checking for a total of \$4,724.06. He said that he had paid several bills and received some dues before the meeting.

Under committee reports Pond Tour chairman Mary Bechtold deferred to Hi Stockwell who reported on the handouts that he had made for the lawn and garden shows. He said that about 400 handouts were given out Kansas Pond Society booth at the Wichita Lawn and

Garden Show. He has some left and would like for members to take a few to pass out or post in their workplace. Hi thanked Eric and Puddles-N-Pads for printing them for us. Mary said that she hopes to have a committee meeting after Stan recovers from his recent hip replacement.

Bob Saathoff reported that he has been trying to meet with Wildlife & Parks on the pond that TAWGS will build at their office on Saturday, April 23rd. At the request of Wildlife & Parks, Kip at Puddles-N-Pads will draw a design of the pond. Volunteers can meet at the Wildlife & Parks office at 8:00 a.m. Bring gloves, any tools that you feel might be used and a brown bag for lunch. The public will be invited to attend to watch the construction and Eric will be on hand to answer questions.

Bob also thanked the Lawn and Garden Booth Committee for their hard work on the pond built in the booth. He said he thought it had raised awareness of the club and increased the club's credibility. Doug Peterman thanked Bob and asked for a show of appreciation for him for the tremendous amount of hours that the put in on the booth project.

Joe Bretienstein said that Ward Meade has been given a new name: Old Prairie Town at Historic Ward Meade site. This is to be used in future publicity of Ward Meade. He said that the Garden Council Plant sale will be held at Fairlawn Plaza on April 30th.

Discussion of repotting the lilies at Ward Meade was discussed. Doug Peterman moved and Dean Demoss seconded that we don't divide the lilies or participate in the plant sale this year. Motion carried.

VP Floyd Gruver proposed possibly changing some of the summer meetings to member's ponds and to shorten the business meeting by letting a steering committee handle some of the club's decisions. This should eliminate a lot of time needed for the business meeting and give more time for the speaker and socializing.

Bob Saathoff moved that we try meeting at ponds for three meetings this summer and that we have a steering committee, consisting of officers and committee chairman, who will meet prior to the regular meeting to discuss business matters. The motion was seconded by Don Taliaferro and carried. President Platis said that the officers and committee chairman should be there at 6:30 prior to next month's meeting. The first meeting to be held at a pond will be in May and will be held at Puddles-N-Pads where Vivian Smith will give a talk on water plants.

Secretary Diane Gruver said that she will be out of town for the June and July meetings and asked for a volunteer to take minutes at those two meetings. She also asked if anyone would like to do the July and August newsletters in her absence. No volunteers came forward for either job.

Eric made a brief report on the National American Water Gardening Society, an organization of pond lovers dedicated to the enjoyment, education, promotion and protection of the water garden hobby. He said there was a need for a national voice to lobby for the policies, laws,

etc., that will affect water gardeners in the future. An affiliate membership is \$45 and includes a subscription to the Lifestyles Magazine.

Duane Eberhardt reported that the Rose Society has invited TAWGS members to their April 12 meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Ward Meade. Doug Helberg, a professional floral designer and judge from Omaha will speak on "Tips for arranging roses for a show and what judges look for." The Rose society would like to have a good turnout for the event.

Hi Stockwell, Dean Demoss, Betty Karnes and Bob Saathoff each won a video, "Ponds 101", donated by Puddles-N-Pads.

Don Taliaferro moved and Duane Eberhardt seconded the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.

Variegated water grass

By Duane Van Dolah

Glyceria



Manna grass and sweet grass are the common name for this plant. The name is derived from the Greek, *glykys*, meaning sweet, a reference to the flavor of the seeds in some species. A widespread genus of 16 temperate species of aquatic grasses that quickly colonize the edges of a stream, ponds, and waterways. One variegated species is worth trying. *Glyceria maxima* var. 'Variegata' (*G. spectabilis* 'Variegata'). It's a rapidly spreading aquatic grass that grows to 2 feet tall. Foliage is striped green, white, and cream with pink flushes in spring. Hardy in zones 5 through 8 with up to 5 inches of water over the crowns. Grow in one gallon or larger pots. Propagation is by separating rooted plants from runner and division. This plant is good for binding banks along streams and lakes. It should be kept in a pot in a garden pond. Prune out fully green leaves to avoid its reverting to green form. Grows well even in shade.

Editor's Note: Duane Van Dolah is a member of the Kansas Pond Society in Wichita. He was also a member of the water garden club in Garden City until it recently disbanded. Duane is a pond enthusiast and has several watergardens at his home in Garden City.

Build-A-Pond Day set for April 23

Mark Saturday, April 23rd, 8:00 am. on your calendar to reserve time to participate in the TAWGS 2005 Build-A-Pond Day. This year's pond construction will occur at the KS Dept. of Wildlife & Parks new Regional office (as well as the entrance to the new State Park) located at the northwest corner of the Menninger Campus. Follow Wanamaker Rd. north of I-70 north through the roundabout to the KDW&P Regional Office. Bring your gloves, work clothes and a brown bag lunch for a learning experience and a great time. Any questions, contact Bob Saathoff, 272-7125.

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

Calendar of Events

April 13-24	Binkley Tulip Days
April 20	TAWGS monthly meeting
April 23	Build Pond at Wildlife & Parks Office Building
April 30	Garden Council Plant Sale
May 18	TAWGS monthly meeting Held at Puddles-N-Pads
June 15	TAWGS monthly meeting
June 25-26	Topeka Pond Tour
July 9-10	Wichita Pond Tour
July 9-10	Kansas City Pond Tour
July 20	TAWGS monthly meeting
August 17	TAWGS monthly meeting
September 21	TAWGS monthly meeting
October 19	TAWGS monthly meeting
November 16	TAWGS Pot Luck Supper

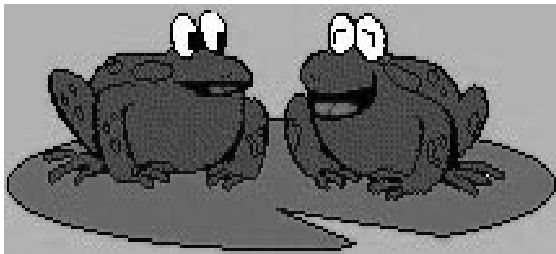
Filters that have been turned off for the winter should be cleaned well before turning them back on this spring. Cleaning will remove toxins that can develop from waste breaking down in the filter in the absence of oxygen. Once your filter is up and running, add Microbe-Lift PL (or some type of bacteria) to seed it with beneficial bacteria.

**Your Dues are Due if your label
 reads 3-05 or 4-05**

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

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY OFFICERS:

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Floyd Gruver	Vice President
Holton	785-364-3046
Diane Gruver	Secretary
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Jim Green	Treasurer
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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:
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