



The Lily Pad

The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

The objective of the society is to encourage a greater appreciation and interest in water gardening and aquatic plants, to disseminate information about those interests and to help our members stimulate the study and culture of water gardens.

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June 1, 2005

Planting plants without pots

Vivian Smith, main grower for Lily Pads and Landscapes, tried to convince TAWGS members to throw away their pots and plant directly in the rocks in their ponds at the May meeting.

"My goal is to talk everybody into taking their plants out of the pots," Lillian said, "it gives the pond a more natural look." Oh sure, there are a few plants that are too invasive to take out of their pots, like lotus, cat tails, reeds and rushes, but others such as lilies and iris do better when they are planted out of their pots. Lizard tail has a rhizome much like a lotus that grows around the inside of the pot.

According to Vivian, planting directly in the rocks is very simple. You just take the plant out of the pot, shake off some of the dirt, dig a hole in the rocks, put the plant in the hole and cover well with rocks. If the root ball is muddy and mushy, just squeeze it into as tight of ball as possible and stick it in the hole. The dirt will settle to the bottom. You can also use a coffee filter or paper towel to contain the dirt. Plants that are planted in the rocks won't have to be disturbed for several years and can be tended to when you pump out some water to do a water change in the spring.

"Plants are supposed to be your filters," Vivian said. They can act much better as a filter if they are planted directly into the pond or into plastic baskets instead of pots.

"I love baskets," Vivian said. "They are as close to coming out of a pot as some people will get." Un-potted plants or plants in baskets won't need to be fertilized because the fish waste in the water running through them will be adequate nutrients. A plant in a pot only gets the nutrients that you put in it or that falls into it. Plants in pots need to be fertilized regularly however. The way to tell if a lily in a pot needs to be re-potted is if it blooms and it has big leaves you can probably leave it alone for another year.

Tropical lilies can be planted in rocks the same way that hardy lilies are planted but you will need to pull them out in the winter and bring them inside if you want to keep them for next year. Tropical cannas that have been kept inside for the winter need to be cut back to just above the water level to let new leaves emerge. Set them in water with no more than 6 inches over the crown of the plant. Iris can be separated any time they aren't actually blooming.

Monthly Meetings

7:00 p.m., Wed., June 15, 2005

Note the location – Pat & Dick Rokey

3830 SE 25th ST - From East 29th & Croco (stoplight), go East on 29th, turn left (North) on Peck Road; continue on Peck until it dead-ends at 25th Street, turn right (East), 3rd house on left - gray rancher. Pat will talk about landscaping around the pond - Bring your own chairs!!!!

7:00 p.m. Wed., July 20

Ward Meade Park

Bring finger food and pictures and come to spend an evening fellowshiping with fellow ponders.

Vivian graduated from K-State in 2002 and worked at the Kansas State gardens for a couple years. She is now the main grower for Lily Pads and Landscapes, the wholesale side of Puddles-N-Pads. They ship plants to 13 different states. Vivian says that she loves "getting muddy" and that she has a green thumb and feels good when she is growing things.

Minutes May 18, 2005

The May meeting of TAWGS was held at Puddles-N-Pads and started with a downpour. The meeting opened with self-introductions prior to an interesting program given by Vivian Smith who works for Lily Pads and Landscape.

It stopped raining during Vivian's talk so the group was able to walk through the grounds and view the beautiful ponds and landscape following her presentation. Refreshments provided by Fischer's, Peterman's and Betty Karnes were enjoyed by everyone. Sheet's and Eberhardt's volunteered to bring refreshments for the June meeting.

Carol Gnagy moved and Jim Green seconded that the April minutes be approved as mailed in the May Lily Pad. Motion carried. Jim Green said that the combined total in savings and checking is at a low of \$1,268.45. He had to transfer money from savings to pay the outstanding bills for the pond at Wildlife and Parks, which so far has totaled \$3,348.87. Money from advertising in the pond tour map is coming in which will help replenish the treasury until the pond tour in June.

Floyd Gruver reported that Bob Saathoff, chairman of the pond at Wildlife & Parks, asked him to please tell

everyone how much he appreciated their help on the pond. It really turned out nice and will be included on the pond tour this year. Floyd reported that the June meeting will be held at the home of Pat and Dick Rokey, 3830 SE 25th ST, 357-4422. Pat will give the program on plants around the pond. The July meeting will be held at Ward Meade Park since it will probably be too hot to meet outside. Everyone is asked to bring finger food and pictures and come prepared to have fun and fellowship with fellow members.

Mary Pat Fischer volunteered to take the minutes for secretary Diane Gruver who will be gone for the June and July meetings. Tom Platis said he would take the minutes in July. There will be no newsletter in July and possibly August while Diane is gone.

Hi Stockwell said that he has the pond tour ticket/map ready to take to the printer and it looks like we will have a very good tour this year. There are 12 ponds on the tour plus the gardens at Lake Shawnee, which he said were better than the Wichita Botanical gardens. There are a few more advertisers this year with total advertising income of \$1,150 from ads. The layout of the map has changed but there are the same number of pages. Hi has done an exceptional job on the ticket/map this year. Thanks! Also thanks to Jon Fischer who did the map for the booklet.

Mary Ann Bechtold, chairman of the Pond Tour Committee said that the reception for the pond tour hosts will be at Puddles-N-Pads at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22. All TAWGS members are invited and asked to bring cookies, etc. for refreshments. She also reported that Del and Betty Lane have agreed to give out our tour handouts at their booth at the Farmers Market so that should help with the publicity.

Jim Green reported that Georgia Abbott from the VA had requested a few more pond tickets for some of their patients. It was the consensus of the group to give extra tickets to the VA since they were on the pond tour.

Stan Bechtold moved and Jon Fischer seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.



Meadowsweet — *Filipendula*

By Duane Van Dolah

Filipendula rubra is a native of eastern United States. It grows 4-5 feet tall with pinnate, irregularly cut leaves, that are toothed, 3 lobed terminal leaflets, to 8

inches across. In early and mid-summer, branching red stems bear crowded clusters of up to 6 inch across, of fragrant, deep peach-pink flowers. Sometimes label as Queen of the Prairie. *Filipendula rubra* grows well next to the pond edge and in bog gardens. It can take over a bog garden. Needs full sun or partial sun with consistent soil moisture or bog conditions. Hardy zones 3 through 8 and propagation is by dividing clumps in autumn or spring. *Filipendula rubra* 'Venusta' has deep rose-pink flowers, becoming paler pink as they age.

Native plants

By Vivian Smith, Lily Pads & Landscape

There are a number of aquatic plants native to our area, and collecting them for your water garden can be an exciting hobby. You probably already have some of these!

Thalia dealbata, or Purple Thalia, is a favorite of mine. The tall, waxy, spear shaped leaves add a very tropical appearance to the garden. The flowers are held high on arching branches.

Lizard's Tail, or *Saururus cernuus*, is a fun little plant with drooping panicles of white flowers that wave in the wind like a pack of lizards hanging out on a rock. The thick, heart shaped leaves cover sturdy stems that tolerate windy locations with ease.

The cardinal flowers, both *Lobelia cardinalis* and *L. siphiliticus*, are natives too. The green leaves set off the bright red of *cardinalis* and perfect blue of *siphiliticus* so well, you'd think they were jewels instead of flowers.

Bog Arum (*Peltandra virginica*) is a good "fill in the empty spaces" plant. With shorter spear shaped leaves, and white flowers, it echoes the shape of Thalia, or could hold its own in a shallow corner.

Blue Pickerel is the native that most people have already, simply because it is the best plant for deeper shelves, and the wands of blue flowers are delightful. (*Pontederia cordata*).

We are doing research and will add more natives to our plant list as we can. Hopefully we will include varieties of Iris, Rose Mallow, and a fern soon.

Happy gardening!

Re-potting aquatic plants

By Mike Kandt, Newsletter Editor

Reprinted 5-05 Kansas Pond Society Newsletter

Now is the time of year that most aquatic plants need to be divided. How can you tell? With most plants, it's pretty obvious. They are outgrowing their pots. Sometimes, they are so anxious to grow they will literally break the plastic homes they grew up in. Kind of like some teenagers just before they go off to college. Here is some basic how-to on dividing lilies and other water plants.

Okay, the first thing you do is to don some old clothes that can get very dirty. You might even want to get some waders or rain gear to keep clean. Sturdy rubber gloves will also keep the muck from getting under the fingernails. Some water lilies can actually stain your skin purple for awhile. Next, find a spot where you can wash off the plants. I think that the

compost pile is ideal for this, but any out-of-the-way corner will do. Now begin pulling the pots from the pond. This task is awkward and best done with a helper. Dump the pot, plant and all, and with a sharp stream of water from the garden hose, wash the mud from the roots and tubers. This helps to see what you are doing. It's not necessary to be too thorough, but it does make repotting a little less messy.

With lilies, look for the growing points. These are the places where leaves grow out of the tubers. Break off the healthiest start, leaving 2 or 3 good growing points. With rushes, you can use a machete to divide the clump. Most other plants will simply pull apart. Once the plants are divided, I usually remove any dead tubers, leaves and stems and excess roots longer than 4-6 inches. These really aren't critical to the plant's success. Compost what you don't plan to replant, give them to friends or take them to your next meeting. Do not discard viable plants in a natural waterway. Aquatic plants are among the most invasive and species not native to this area can possibly get out of control.

For horizontally growing water lilies, use plastic pots at least 12-16 inches in diameter. Anything over 8 inches deep is a waste. For marginals, the black plastic nursery pots are fine, but use some shade cloth or weed barrier in the bottom to keep the dirt in the pot. Keep the size of the plant in mind when selecting the pot. The taller the plant, the more likely it is to blow over in the wind. Deeper pots don't help this matter; you want wider ones. Cannas and taros are particularly bad about this.

The soil I prefer to use is common clay or garden soil. Unlike terrestrial plants that want to hold water, avoid organic matter in aquatic planting media. It will only sour and not contribute much to the plant. The clay will provide lots of minerals to the plants. Organic matter and vermiculite (the little white particles in potting soil) will also float out of the pot and make a mess in the pond. Some people recommend soil-less potting media or plain kitty litter. This is OK, but it offers no nutrients or minerals. Plants will diminish or die if not fertilized regularly in this stuff.

Fill the pot half way with soil, and then add fertilizer. I use pink fruit tree stakes, but any general purpose fertilizer (10-10-10) will do. Cover the fertilizer with a little soil and place the plant. Lilies grow away from the growing points, so place the cut end of the tuber against the side of the pot, angling it a little towards the center. This allows the tuber to grow around the pot in circles without growing straight into an edge. If it does this, the tuber will readily grow right out of the pot. Fill with soil up to 1-2 inches from the edge. Lily tubers should be exposed above the soil, with the roots anchored in the soil.

Next top off the plant with 1-2 inches of pea gravel. This gravel should be about ½ to ¾ inches in size. Anything less will be dug out by fish and frogs. Anything more may inhibit the plant growth. Good hard river gravel is the best. Avoid crushed limestone.

Return the plants to the pond or keep in the shade so they can't dry out too badly. Carefully tilt the pots to slowly let water seep into the soil and gravel. Dropping them quickly to the bottom will cause the air trapped in the soil to gush into the pond. Most marginals

should be placed with the minimum of water over the crown. Some species will tolerate more, but 1-2 inches works for most. Water lilies can be placed with 6 to 24 inches of water over the crown. A shallow placement will get them into warmer water and give them a head start on growing and blooming. This may also keep worm-seeking fish out of the pots. As they become more established, they can be lowered.

Some people like to label their plants so they can remember the particular cultivar. A waterproof marker on any piece of plastic will work. I have seen plastic spoons, cut-up soft drink cups or tie-on labels. Avoid metal that will rust. Make two labels and bury one in the bottom of the pot. Stick the other in the edge of the pot. This way, if the one in the edge gets lost, you still have the one in the bottom.

When trading plants with other members, it is a good idea to wash them off well to minimize the chance of spreading one pond's eco-system to another. Sometimes this can be bad. Other times, you might just transfer some fish or frog eggs and start babies in a new place.

Be careful netting koi

Reprinted from 2-2002 Greater Louisville Koi and Goldfish Society newsletter

When koi are caught there are two utensils required: a net and a container large enough to hold the fish. The net is used as a director to steer the koi into the container which is held at an angle with the bottom lip below the water surface. If the fish is not to be held captive in the net, then there is no need for it to be deep or tapered. Additionally, if the koi rubs against the net during the steering operation, we certainly do not want a rough material which could damage or remove scales. Plus the edge of the net hoop should be protected to eliminate scale damage.

Look for these attributes when purchasing a net:

1. Size – larger than your largest koi. The fish will grow.
2. Mesh – 1/8 to ¼, soft and pliable.
3. Shape – round with good, smooth metal or rubber or vinyl rim protection.
4. Handle – 6' to 8' wood or strong aluminum and telescopic.
5. Depth – net depth of 1" to 6" when measured from the rim.
6. Construction – Handle joints should be secure.

Deep nets slow the netting process because of the drag they create in the water chasing koi around the tank or pond. They cause a great deal of stress not only for the fish being pursued, but also other fish as well. Also, deep nets bend the bodies of even the smaller fish, which can cause physical damage. Fish have difficulty seeing black netting and will often turn back into the net when trying to get away making the catching process much easier.

Discard any nets with these attributes:

1. Triangular support with hard, wide mesh.
2. Small diameter telescopic handles. They flex.
3. Deep, tapered nets placing the koi's tail in its mouth.

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

Calendar of Events

June 15	TAWGS monthly meeting Held at Dick & Pat Rokey's – 3830 SE 25 th ST – 357-4422 Bring Chairs
June 22	Pond Tour Host Reception at Puddles-N-Pads
June 25-26	Topeka Pond Tour
July 9-10	Wichita Pond Tour
July 9-10	Kansas City Pond Tour
July 20	TAWGS monthly meeting Bring finger food & pictures
August 17	TAWGS monthly meeting
September 21	TAWGS monthly meeting
October 19	TAWGS monthly meeting
November 16	TAWGS Pot Luck Supper

Pond Fun Fact

A Koi's age can be determined by counting the rings on one of its scales.

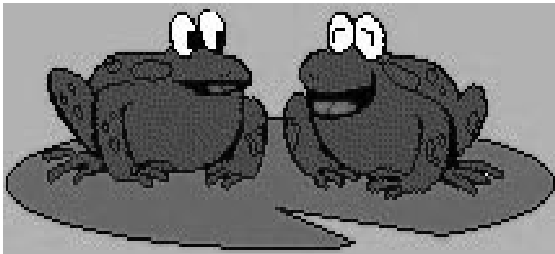
Your Dues are Due if your label reads 4-05, 5-05, or 6-05

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

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at Ward Meade Park unless otherwise publicized. Dues are \$15 per single or \$20 per family and can be sent to Jim Green, 5701 SW Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614.



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.