



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.

Volume 12, Issue 11

Dec. 1, 2009



Diane Gruver presents a plaque of appreciation to outgoing president Duane Eberhardt for his 4 years of dedication and service as president of TAWGS.

TAWGS Minutes 11-18-2009

President Duane Eberhardt called the TAWGS meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with self introductions. Following introductions, the members enjoyed a delicious potluck supper. The meeting resumed with Duane thanking everyone for their support during his presidency and especially since the death of their son.

Secretary Diane Gruver reminded everyone to please pay their dues when they are indicated in yellow on the hard copy of the Lily Pad or electronically when e-mail indicates dues are due.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that we have \$2,436.84 in the checking account. Of that amount \$1,760 us committed to various projects. Mary Weaver moved and Ken Mulder seconded that the treasurer's report be accepted. Motion carried.

Pond Tour chairman Phil Thompson reported that the pond tour committee had met briefly on the 12th and that the next meeting will be held at The Bakers Dozen Donut Shop, 21st and McAlister, at 7:00 p.m., Thursday December 3rd. Anyone interested in helping with the tour is invited to attend.

Mary Weaver reported that the lawn and garden committee had met on the 12th and will meet again on the 19th. Their plan is to replicate the project just completed at Ward Meade Park. It will include the new water features, the fountain and the mansion.

Bob Saathoff reported that the recent Ward

Monthly Meeting
7:00 Wed., Feb. 17
Historic Old Prairie Town
(Formerly Ward Meade Park)
Speaker to be announced

Meade project has turned out to be a "Big Project." He said the committee has learned a lot and that are still a few leaks that need to be worked on. Bob explained that the project was a big leap of faith on the part of the club's part and that the costs were greater than anticipated. Some of the materials were left over and they have been sold to Hi Stockwell so that will help recover some of the expenses. Rob Nordyke has also purchased some of the left over materials. The bill with Complete Aquatics was \$7,435, which was \$435 more than Ray Schroeder from Ward Meade agreed to spend from the Foundation, so Bob went ahead and authorized for TAWGS to pay the \$435, which put him over the \$2,960 TAWGS voted to spend last month. With the sale of the leftover materials and the \$1,500 credit at Waterscape Concepts, TAWGS has ended up with \$1,338.81 left over, however.

Bob recommended and Floyd Gruver moved that we retain the \$1,338.81 for now so that we have money to fund the lawn and garden show display in February. Whatever is left of that amount after the garden show will be paid to the Foundation. Mark Weaver seconded the motion, which carried.

Ray Schroeder said that he was at the meeting to thank everyone for their work on the project. "It is really neat and we want you to know how much we appreciate all the work you have done," Ray said. "We appreciate all that you do in the gardens." He said that the gardens were full of people after the article about the new water feature came out in the At Home in the Capitol Journal a week or so ago. The article gave them great exposure to the public. Ray said they have planted 28,000 tulips in the garden, many of them along the streambed. The permanent landscaping along the streambed will be done after Tulip Time next spring. They have also planted 400 alliums and 2,000 daffodils. They are looking forward to see how it all turns out next spring.

Don Hutley announced that Waterscape Concepts will give TAWGS members a 20% discount

until December 25th. Thanks Don and Sharon.

In the absence of VP Don Taliaferro, Diane presented a plaque to Duane for his dedicated service as president the last four years.

Jim Green moved and Amy Thompson seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.



The top waterfall splits in the middle before draining into the streambed below. Photo by Floyd Gruver.



A newstreambed at Ward Meade Park connects the various pools of water. Photo by Floyd Gruver.

Volunteers build water feature

TAWGS members spent 312 hours working on the water features built at Ward Meade Park last month. Several more hours have been spent since then working to make minor adjustments and repair leaks.

Thanks go to the many individuals that helped build the streambed and ponds, including: Eric Wood, Eric's 2 sons, Mary Weaver, Hi Stockwell, Mary & Duane Eberhardt, Allen Ellis, Jim Green, Dale Jirik, Doug Peterman, Helen & Tom Platis, Sandy & Don Regier, Cheryl & Bob Saathoff, Linda & Doug Reynolds, Tom Routh, Don Taliaferro, Mark Weaver, Jim Roberts, and Glen Casper.

Thanks to Bob Saathoff, who chaired the project and has devoted many hours working with the City Parks and Recreation Dept. on the water features.

Water plants

by Duane Van Dolah

Obedient plant

Physostegia



Other names for this plant are False dragonhead and Lion heart. The common name of obedient plant comes from the plants having hinged stalks that allow the flowers to be bent in any direction and stay there. This plant gets 3 feet tall with a spread of the clump 2 feet wide. Certain species of the Obedient Plant can be invasive through runners, especially in sandy loam. Clayish soil seems to keep it controlled.

In late summer and early fall, hooded, twin lipped flowers form on spikes in shades of white, pinks, and lavenders. The blooms start from the bottom and move up. The leaves are green and narrow lanced shaped, and with slightly toothed edges. The zones for this plant are 4-11 in sun and part-shade. The more common species like moist, to wet soil throughout the season but prefers a dryer condition during the winter.

Propagation is by division in the spring or from seed. *P. virginiana*, is a native of eastern United States and is the most common garden variety. Some of the cultivars are 'Vivid', which is more compacted and denser, with dark lilac-pink flowers. 'Variegata' is the variegated form with purplish pink flowers. 'Summer Snow' is pure white. *P. leptophylla* is the true aquatic species of the Obedient Plant. The height is 3-4 feet tall and with a 2 feet spread. Flowers are a lavender-pink, and it will grow in moist soil and water depth to 1 inch. It grows in sun, part-shade, and can even tolerate deep shade. Its zones are 5-11 but needs to be over wintered in a pond submerged in the water below the ice.

One interesting note is that gardeners have had good luck growing the Obedient Plant under walnut trees, which is normally toxic to most plants.

What happens to my frogs in the winter?

Reprinted from 11-7-09 *The Pond Guy*



Frogs ribbit and hop in your pond all spring, summer and fall, but when the cold weather comes, your frogs seem to disappear. Don't worry – they don't croak! They simply take a long winter nap.

There are more than 5,000 described species of frogs living on just about every surface of the planet. From the frigid Arctic Circle to the hottest deserts and everywhere in between – including your back yard. These welcome additions to any pond have evolved a well-known strategy to survive environmental extremes: they hibernate. Frogs that live in temperate climates with cold winters, like those throughout much of the

United States, enter into a dormant state of sleep while living off their body fat reserves.

Aquatic frogs, like the leopard frog and the American bull frog, typically hibernate underwater. Because their skin can absorb oxygen, they lie just below the surface among aquatic plants where they'll be safe from predators and frosty temperatures. An aeration system will add oxygen to your pond and create a hospitable habitat for your amphibian friends – and your finned friends, too.

Terrestrial frogs, like American toads, will hibernate on land. The ones that can dig will create a comfortable burrow beneath the frost line and sleep all winter; the ones that can't dig will find safe hiding places, like hollowed-out logs, between rocks or beneath a pile of leaves, to protect them from weather and predators. Incredibly, these frogs won't freeze to death; though they may partially freeze in very cold climates, a high concentration of glucose in their organs prevents them from freezing completely. When spring comes, the frozen portions thaw and they're ready to get back to eating and reproducing.

Frogs are just one of dozens of critters that are drawn to water features. By providing a habitat with food, water and shelter, you can draw wildlife to your pond – which will enhance your enjoyment of it even more.

Do I really need a pond deicer?

It costs a small fortune to run it. Are there any other options?

Reprinted from 11-24-09 The Pond Guy

Some pond deicers cost a lot of money to run – but there is an alternative. Unless you're lucky enough to live in a climate that doesn't freeze, you're going to need some type of device to keep a hole open in the pond during winter months. When a pond develops a layer of ice, a deicer is used to melt a small hole in the ice allowing toxic gases to escape and oxygen to enter the pond. For years, this has been accomplished by just using a deicer.

Unfortunately, the deicer can also melt a hole in your wallet. Pond heaters use anywhere from 100 watts (for ponds up to 600 gallons) to 1,500 watts (for ponds up to 1,000 gallons) of electricity. When you consider utilities charge from 8 to 15 cents per kilowatt hour (1,000 watts of electricity used in one hour) depending on the location, the price of running a deicer can cost more than \$75 per month!

The good news is that an aeration system can also keep a hole in the ice – and do so for a lot less money. For instance, Water Garden Aeration Kits use a high-efficiency air compressor that operates with as little 12 watts (that's 88–99% electricity savings!) of electricity to push air to the diffuser. The action created by the air causes the ice to weaken, eventually creating a hole. This aerator also helps to add oxygen and circulate the water below the surface.

To install an aeration kit in your decorative pond, place the compressor near your power source. Make sure the compressor is covered – a faux rock cover is perfect for this application. Attach one end of airline tubing to the compressor and the other end to the

diffuser. Place the diffuser away from the deepest point of your pond and no more than 4 feet below the surface. Plug it in and you're ready for the cold weather!

Another benefit to an aeration system is that they can be used all year long. Aeration works great in the summer, providing oxygen for your fish and keeping your pond free of muck and debris.

If you already have a pond deicer and plan to run it this winter, save money with the *ThermoCube – it can cut your electrical cost in half.

**Thermo Cube - 115V Standard Plug. Use this device to save money! Plugs into a standard electrical outlet automatically turning power on at 35 degrees and off at 45 degrees. Great for use with pond de-icers and winter time aeration application.*

Prepare pond for fish survival

Reprinted from 9-24-09 The Pond Guy

As the temperatures fall, we may be pulling out our winter coats and goulashes, but your fish don't need them at all! In fact, pond fish, like koi and goldfish, do quite well in a pond over the winter - even if it freezes over - as long as your pond is at least 18 inches deep (though we recommend 24 inches to be certain the fish don't turn into popsicles). The fish will go into their annual torpor, or dormancy, and will require little more than clean, oxygen-rich water to survive. To ensure they get that life-sustaining oxygen, you will need to do four things:

1. Remove debris from the pond. In the fall, before ice forms, give your pond or water feature a good cleaning. Rake out debris, trim dead leaves off plants, net floating leaves and remove as much detritus as possible so very little will be decomposing - and releasing harmful gasses - through the cold months.
2. Add some beneficial bacteria. Also in the fall, you may want to add some beneficial bacteria. It accelerates the decomposition of leaves, scum and sediment that builds up during the fall and winter months. In the spring, it replenishes winter bacteria loss, jump starts the filter and breaks down unwanted waste, making your pond water ready for a clean spring and summer.
3. Install an aerator or air stone. Colder water holds more oxygen than warmer water, but you'll still want to inject air into the pond during the winter months, especially if your pond freezes over. One or two air stones or a diffuser placed in a shallow part of your pond will be enough to aerate the water and keep a small hole in the ice, which will allow harmful gasses to escape and oxygen to enter.
4. Hook up a heater. If you live in a frigid area where the ice on your pond builds to an inch or more, you can use a floating heater or de-icer, like the Thermo Pond, that melts through the ice. Again, it's critical to keep an open hole in the ice to allow for gas exchange. In most cases, your fish will be just fine through the winter months. When the water warms, you can begin feeding them again and enjoying them for yet another year!

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

Calendar of Events

Dec. 3 – Pond Tour Committee meeting
2010

Feb. 17 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

Feb. 19-21 – Topeka Lawn and Garden Show

Mar. 3 – 7 Wichita Garden Show

Mar. 17 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

April 21 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

May 19 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

June 16 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

June 26-27 – Topeka Pond Tour

Aug. 18 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

Sept. 15 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

Oct. 3 – Apple Fest

Oct. 20 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

Nov. 17 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

.....
*Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!*

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads
Anytime in 2009 or 2-10**

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

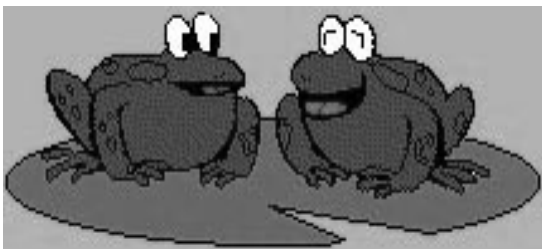
Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW
Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

2009 OFFICERS:

Don Taliaferro Topeka	President 785-272-8348
Bob Saathoff Topeka	Vice President 785-272-7125
Sandy Regier Topeka	Secretary 785-286-9998
Jim Green Topeka	Treasurer 785-272-7139

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at Old Prairie Town (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

The Lily Pad

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:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor
408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436
785 364-3046

fdgruver@embarqmail.com

We reserve the right to edit input to meet publishing requirements. Copy cannot be returned.