



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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Kip Walker and Wendy Hix discussing fish at the May TAWGS meeting.

Keeping our fish healthy

by Diane Gruver

Wendy Hix and her helper Mary Bailey gave a very interesting talk about fish health at the May TAWGS meeting. They are from the Kansas City area. Wendy said that she had been in the business for eight years but she has been keeping koi for 15 years. Mary is a koi keeper and has attended many seminars and meetings on fish health. Both are serious koi keepers, saying they both have had fish that were worth \$5,000 die. At that point, I think most of us realized that we aren't quite that serious about our fish. Few raised their hand to the question of "Do you check your water quality?" Most of us raised our hands for "Do you make water changes?" although I doubt that we make as many changes as they were indicating, like 20% once a week.

"Topping it off is not a water change," Wendy said. Use a sump pump to take water off the bottom of the pond if you don't have a bottom drain.

Wendy said that this winter and spring have been especially bad for water temperature fluctuations, which is a problem for our fish. She said do not feed the fish until the water temperature (not air) has reached 50 to 55 degrees consistently. She said that parasites are very active in water temperatures between 60 and 69 degrees.

"A true koi pond doesn't have any plants," Wendy said. It also doesn't have rocks on the bottom because they are hard to clean. When you stir up the muck on the

Monthly Meeting
7:00 Wed., June 16, 2010
Historic Old Prairie Town
(formerly Ward Meade Park)
Fish Fry Dinner
Please bring a side dish and your
table service
Ray Schroeder will give a tour and history of the park

bottom it is like flushing the toilet. Be sure to remove the fish during cleaning, especially if your pond has rocks in the bottom.

Common symptoms of fish disease are:

- Gaping at the surface or staying under waterfalls – lack of oxygen.
- Isolation – staying away from the school of fish.
- Flashing, scratching and jumping – caused by parasites, toxin or poor water quality.
- Lying on the bottom of the pond
- Head down and tail up – bacterial infection
- Swimming upside down – swim bladder
- Dropsy – scales stand out from the body or bloated body
- Ulcerations – sores on body caused by parasites or injury. Koiphen.com is a good information site about parasites.

Common fish disease and parasites:

- Anchor worm – visible to the naked eye. Can be physically removed; treat with Dimilin
- Lice – visible to naked eye as freckles or dark spot; treat with Dimilin
- Ich – white spots appear on the skin. Ich is the fastest killer of fish. Treat with Formalin and malachite green. Will need to treat three to four times to completely rid the disease.
- Carp pox – a cool water viral disease. Gold fish are prone to tumors due to breeding (spawning is brutal). Has a waxy appearance.

So, how do you go about preventing these types of problems?

- The first and most important step is maintaining good water quality. Throw away the test strips and buy a good quality water test kit. Know that

rain is acidic and can cause rapid pH changes which can result in fish mortality. Mary said that with all the recent rains she has been dumping a lot of baking soda into her koi pond to reduce the pH level.

- Quarantine all new fish about three weeks before introducing them to your pond. The average life span from the dealer to the pond is two days for koi.
- Clean all new plants before inserting them into your pond as they may carry parasites or fish eggs.
- Do not overstock the pond. If you don't control your population, Mother Nature and disease will do the job for you.
- Make sure you have adequate filtration for the size of the pond and the number of fish in it.
- Routine filter cleaning and water changes throughout the season. Be sure to add dechlorinator with each water change.
- Know your water perimeters. Check weekly for ammonia, nitrites and pH levels.
- Feed low protein food in spring and fall and high protein during the summer months.

Good internet sites for information are:

- www.koivet.com – Doc Johnson's site has a good variety of pond/fish information
- www.pondcrisis.com – fish and pond help
- www.koi-unleashed.co.uk – Duncan Griffiths is a very knowledgeable koi keeper

Wendy stressed that if you have questions or need help with your fish problems, you can call her at Hix & Son Aquatics at (913) 481-5416, 2305 W 96th St, Leawood, e-mail wendy@hixandsonaquatics.com or find information on their website at www.hixandsonaquatics.com.

TAWGS Minutes 5-19-2010

Vice President, Bob Saathoff called the May meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with self introductions.

Bob Saathoff introduced Wendy Hix and Mary Bailey as our guest speakers for the evening, talking on the topic of fish health.

Tom and Pat Routh provided the delicious refreshments we all enjoyed and we thank them very much.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that we have \$2,894.77 in the bank. Mary Weaver made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and the motion was seconded by Paul Montgomery. Motion carried.

Jim Green is going to give Phil Thompson the treasurer's report to put on the TAWGS website. A system will be worked out so that we would have to have a password to get to the report.

Jim Green made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting of 4-21-10 as written in the April Lily Pad. Mark Weaver seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Diane Gruver had water lily rhizomes to give away after the meeting for anyone wanting any.

It was reported that Waters Edge gave \$150 worth of plants for the VA pond.

Phil Thompson reported that \$502 was turned in tonight for pond tour vouchers sold. Phil said if we wanted to keep vouchers to sell, we could, but we should sell them

for \$6.00 now. Phil passed around a signup sheet for pond sitters that will be needed at the pond tour.

Bob Saathoff reported that he, Ray Schroeder and Mark Weaver have been working on finding and fixing leaks at the new water feature at Ward Meade, but were still having trouble finding one leak. An automatic fill system has been installed at the upper water feature.

Ray Schroeder suggested that we set up a plan where volunteers could work so many hours for a certain amount of money in exchange for the debt being lowered for what we owe to Parks and Rec. Ray said a future project is being planned to put in a rock garden at Gage Park. Ray reported that with the city revenues down there will be positions eliminated as employees are given incentives to retire and these positions will not be filled. Ray said about 20% of the work force will be eliminated, and that he plans on retiring in June after being with the city for 40 years. Ray said he will come back as a volunteer for the rest of the year and try to set up a program to recruit volunteers on a day-a-week basis for general maintenance at Ward Meade.

Floyd Gruver made a motion to accept the challenge for a volunteer program at Ward Meade and Jim Green seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ray said tulip time cleared about \$6,600.00 and the tulips sold afterwards that were dug up cleared about \$1,800.00.

Diane Gruver asked if there had been any thought given to a member pond tour. This will be discussed more at the next meeting or through phone calls.

At our next meeting here at Ward Meade on June 16, there will be a fish fry and potluck. Ray Schroeder will give a tour and history of the park.

A drawing was held for gift certificates based on the number of ticket vouchers sold; one ticket went into the drawing for each ticket sold. Mary Weaver won a gift certificate from Waterscapes, Mark Weaver won one from Skinners and Amy Thompson won from Jacksons. Mary donated her gift certificate to purchase a lotus for Ward Meade.

Helen Platis won a bottle of Aqua One in the drawing provided by Kip Walker.

Mark Weaver made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cheryl Saathoff seconded. Motion carried.

Bog Plants

by Duane Van Dolah

Bigleaf ligularia

Ligularia dentata

This plant came to us originally from China. Some of the other common names are Leopard Plant, Golden Groundsel and Golden Ray. It's a clump-forming plant with a mounding habit that needs consistently moist soil



and should never be allowed to dry out. The heart-shaped leaves can get up to 1 foot in width. The new leaves are purplish-red, and then mature to a toothed, glossy, bronze-green on top that stays purple underneath. Yellow-orange, 2-4 inches across, daisy-shaped flowers appear in the late summer on strong, leafless stems, crowded blooms that stand 3-4 feet above the foliage. The spread of this plant is 2-3 feet in partial to full shade. Hardy from zones 3 to 8, the plant enjoys a cool location; so a north planting would help it from getting stressed.

Propagation is by dividing the root ball in spring or after it is finished flowering. In this species there are four named cultivars. 'Britt Marie Crawford' has broad, glossy, dark chocolate leaves with dark purple undersides with dark purple stems. 'Desdemona' is a more compacted plant with brownish to purple leaves on the top and metallic green fading to rich brown underneath. 'Othello' is a smaller version of 'Desdemona' but with smaller flowers and more reddish-purple color on stems and underneath. 'Gregynog Gold' has a height to 6 feet with 2 feet spread and large conical flower heads that are a vivid yellow-orange. *Ligularia tussilaginea*, 'Aureo-maculata', has variegated, gold and white leaves with pale yellow flowers, *Ligularia Przewalskii*, 'The Rocket', grows 6 feet tall with large cut-edged round leaves and narrow spires of lemon yellow flowers.

Refreshments for 2010

We have a couple of months that we need someone to volunteer to bring refreshments. Also, it is nice to have more than one couple each month. If you would like to volunteer, please call Don Taliaferro at 272-8348 or e-mail dontal@swbell.net or Diane Gruver, 364-3046 or fdgruver@embarqmail.com.

June	Fish Fry – Saathoff and Taliaferro
July	NEED VOLUNTEERS
August	Tom and Helen Platis
Sept.	Floyd & Diane Gruver
Oct.	NEED VOLUNTEERS
Nov.	Pot Luck



Pond built at Hy Vee by Bob Saathoff, Mark Weaver and Hi Stockwell to promote the Pond Tour in June.

Why koi chase each other

Reprinted from 5-5-10 The Pond Guy

The thrill of the chase

Just like any other pet, koi provide pond guys and gals everywhere with entertainment and companionship. So now your new found finned friends are chasing each other around and being rather aggressive towards each other. This violent activity may seem disturbing to us but for your koi it is actually a natural process. No your fish have not transformed your water garden in their very own fight club; this is their way of courting each other.

With Friends Like You...

So nothing says love like bashing your partner into a few plants and rocks right? What you are seeing is the male koi chasing the female around the pond trying to push the eggs out of her by pinching her between rocks or other males. It is during this process that the eggs are released into the water and fertilized. While we may have been a little slow to realize love is in the air ... or in your pond rather, there are still a few things you can do to help your koi have a successful spawning season.

Bring On The Plants:

Adding aquatic plants like hornwort and water hyacinth in your pond will provide excellent surface area for freshly laid eggs to attach to and will also provide coverage for them.

Keep It Clean:

It is important that you keep the water in your pond clean and free from disease while the fry are developing. Perform regular water changes and use dechlorinator when adding new water to remove any chlorine and toxic heavy metals from your tap or well water. Some pond owners add pond salt to the water to keep fish stress down and also help prevent diseases.

Survival of the fittest...

After the fry hatch, you may not see the new additions until they become big enough to fend for themselves. Once they hatch they hide and fight for survival. Koi are not loving parents, they tend to eat their own eggs and fry. Out of thousands of eggs koi lay, only a select few will survive.

As your new additions began to grow, there will be added ammonia and nitrates in the pond. If you plan to keep these new koi make sure you are providing adequate filtration in your pond and you are not deviating from a practical fish load for your size pond. Having more fish in your pond than your filtration can handle will lead to additional more severe algae blooms and muck accumulation. It is important that you keep adding beneficial bacteria to break this waste down.

Killing ants around the pond

Ants are really bad this year and people are wondering how to kill them near their water garden or koi pond but have concerns about accidentally poisoning their fish.

Diatomaceous earth (DE) has proven to be an effective and natural ant control. If a little gets in the pond water there should be no harm done. DE is commonly available at many garden centers. Follow the label's instructions for use.

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

Calendar of Events

June 16 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting
June 23 – Pond Tour Hosts Reception
June 26-27 – Topeka Pond Tour
July 10-11 – KC Pond Tour
July 10-11 – Wichita 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

Do you have trouble with fish rooting around in the soil of the plant pots in your pond? If so, try potato sized cobble stones on top of the gravel to discourage this behavior.

Bring side dish and table service to Fish Fry June 16.

Your Dues are Due if your label reads 4-10, 5-10 or 6-10

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

2010 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

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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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785 364-3046

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