



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 13, Issue 8

Oct. 1, 2010

TAWGS 9-15-2010 Minutes

President Don Taliaferro called the September meeting to order at 7:00 with self introductions.

Bob Saathoff introduced Gerald Binkley as our speaker for the evening since Topeka Landscape, who was our scheduled speaker, couldn't be here. Gerald talked about projects going on with the city, including Gage Park.

Kip Walker reported that there are various projects that need to be taken care of at Gage Park, but the area near the carousel needs immediate attention. Kip said that the area around the Discovery Center being built will have several water features including rain gardens and hands on water features. Also, a \$75,000 memorial donation has been made for the Discovery Center.

Mary Weaver made a motion to approve the minutes of our August meeting as written in the Lily Pad. Tom Routh seconded, motion carried.

Treasurer Jim Green was not here tonight so Don Taliaferro reported that Jim told him we currently have \$1,463.72. Bob Saathoff made a motion to approve the treasurers report. Don Regier seconded, motion carried.

Tom Platis read off the scheduled times for the volunteers for the Apple Festival on 10-3-2010. He said the volunteers would be getting a letter from the city verifying scheduled times and other pertinent information.

Our new members, Ed and Linda Klem, provided our delicious refreshments for tonight and we sure thank them.

Mary Weaver reported that this Saturday 9/18, will be a work day here at Ward Meade with the main project being to do some major clean-up in and around Anna's Pond. The work will start at 7:30 and she encouraged as many to come as can and bring whatever garden and/or pond tools that might be needed. Also, she mentioned that anyone who had any extra koi or goldfish could put them in the pond west of the Rose Garden at Gage Park.

Bob Saathoff said that next spring a backhoe with some type of shovel will clean out some of the muck that is building up on our pond at Lake Shawnee by the bridge. This can be done without hurting the lining. Bob said the lotus have really done well and there were only a couple put there to start with.

Don Taliaferro asked if anyone wanted to

Monthly Meeting

7:00 Wed., Oct 20, 2010

**Historic Old Prairie Town
(formerly Ward Meade Park)**

"Preparing for Fall & Winter" or "What to do When it Turns Cold"
Deb Spencer, Waters Edge

volunteer to be on the nominating committee for officers for next year. Kip Walker volunteered.

Next meeting we will discuss this more, along with trying to get volunteers for the 2011 Pond Tour and the Garden Show display next year.

Hi Stockwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mary Weaver seconded. Motion carried.

Sandy Regier, Secretary

Binkley talks about TBA projects

by Mary Weaver

Gerald Binkley gave a nice presentation about upcoming projects as well as projects that have been done in the past. TBA has donated over \$9,000.00 to W/M Park for landscaping projects in and around the water features that were put in by TAWGS. Membership and participation are down at TBA, so Gerald said that they are changing their meeting time to evenings to accommodate more people and to try to build up membership for the club.

The most recent project belonging to TBA is a large flower bed and arbor that will be located just North of the greenhouses and East of Snyder's cabin in Gage park. He had a rough drawing he shared with the group that showed a large arbor that will be an entrance to the gardens and the beds will include several large flower beds that will, in a series of phases, take up most of the grassy space west of the Rock Garden Pond.

TBA (as well as TAWGS) is working to make Topeka a destination for tourism to see the various water features and botanical gardens. In the past, bus tours came to Topeka from other cities and states to tour the gardens at tulip time and while they were here, visited other locations throughout the city. TBA would like to grow this tourism business.

Taking stock of your pond

by David Jones, Master KHA

Reprinted from the Newsletter of the North Texas Water Garden Society September 2010

At the end of summer, we can look back on our ponding season and take stock of what great and not so great things have affected the enjoyment of our ponds. Using a focused approach, we can evaluate many aspects of the pond and fish, how much enjoyment or drudgery it has been, and what we might like to change to make it better for next year.

First, did you enjoy the pond? If so, then you're a "Happy Ponder"- Congratulations! However, there's always room for improvement, so let's take stock of our pond in three different categories. Take a piece of paper and write these main topics at the head of each section, then divide each section into "Positives" and "Negatives."

#1 Is your pond environment a wonderful place to be? #2 How easy is it to do routine maintenance? #3 What do you need to know about water quality and fish health?

Let's take these one at a time and I'll offer some suggestions.

#1. One of the great pleasures in ponding is sitting out next to the pond, watching and feeding your fish, and enjoying everything that's going on around you. Do you have a suitable sitting area next to the pond? If not, that could be a great winter project! With all the do-it-yourself materials available now for taking on this kind of improvement, you can build a gravel and paver, stone or wooden patio/deck yourself! Are you sitting in the sun? How about a patio cover to offer some shade when sitting outside in the heat, or a fan or water misting system to make pond side relaxing and more comfortable? How about a table so you could eat your breakfast or dinner out by the pond? If you have plants in your pond, are they well kept and trimmed? Would you like some different varieties or colors next year? How's the landscaping around the pond? Is your water as clear as possible so you can see your beautiful fish? Do you have a population overload? If so, maybe its time to give away some of your less desirable fish to someone starting a pond, and thereby provide more space for your favorites. Remember, they're getting bigger every year.

#2) Routine Maintenance: when I ask people what they like and dislike about their ponds, the number one dislike is cleaning the pond and filter. Many ponds and filters are not easy to clean, and don't get cleaned as often as they should! Consider the kind of ponds with rocks on the bottom-they need to be disassembled and power washed each year to clean out all the crud that has accumulated between the rocks! It would be better to get rid of the rocks, put in a retro bottom drain to keep the pond floor clean, and never have to disassemble the pond again! Similarly, there are filters that must be taken apart to squeeze out the filter pads, there are better types of filters that are easy to clean. It's been my observation that if pond equipment is not easy to take care of, then it doesn't get cleaned. So take it upon yourself to learn about some better equipment, and lighten your maintenance load. Part of routine maintenance is weekly water changes. Draining out 10% of your pond water and refilling with dechlorinated

new water refreshes your pond and keeps your water looking great! Foam around the waterfall and tea colored water are signs of old tired water, which may contain toxins and be harmful to your fish. Establish a weekly regimen of water changes and your pond will benefit immensely.

#3) How's my knowledge of water quality and fish health? This is an area of improvement for "Newbies" and "Oldies" alike! Every pond owner should be able to run a complete water analysis to determine when things are going right, and when they're not. Similarly, observing your fish and recognizing normal behavior is as important as realizing when fish are acting abnormally. There are lots of resources on the Internet to learn new things about your pond and its inhabitants. Taking stock of your ponding activities is a good thing to do each year. It moves you and your ponding experience forward, and makes each year more enjoyable. Best wishes to your fishes.

Moisture loving plants

by Duane Van Dolah

Ornamental

Rice

Oryza Sativa



This is a rice plant grown for its ornamental use. It is an annual from the grass family that is native to Southeast Asia. The cultivar 'Black Madras' has upright green leaves, streaked and shaded burgundy-purple. The flowers are insignificant. The narrow flat leaves get 16 inches high and about ½ inch wide, growing into a dense, fountain-shaped plant.

Drooping lime-green panicles of rice rise just above the foliage in mid to late summer. They ripen to a brown color by early autumn. At this stage the seeds can be harvested for planting in the spring. It grows from a boggy condition to up to 2 inches of water over its crown. It must never get dry!

Full sun brings out the best color, but it will grow in partial shade. It is grown as an annual or for zones 9-10. 'Red Dragon' is another cultivar that has burgundy red foliage. With the plants height getting to 30 inches and the width being 18 to 30 inches. Propagation is by seeds (rice) harvested in early autumn and direct-sow as soon as the danger of frost is past in the spring. The seeds for the rice plant seem to be easier to obtain than the plant. Most major seed companies sell the seeds, and they have a very good germination rate.

Refreshments for 2010

Oct. Need a volunteer. Call Don Taliaferro, 272-8348

Nov. Pot Luck

Preparing your pond plants for winter

Reprinted from 10-5-2009 The Pond Guy

If you live in cooler climates – even those that don't dip too far below freezing – it's almost time to prepare your plants for winter. Each type of aquatic plant needs to be cared for in a different way, but the most important factor to remember is that the roots of your plants must not come into contact with ice or freezing temperatures. If they do, they simply won't survive.

Keeping in mind regional variances, here's how to keep your aquatic plants healthy, happy and ready to bloom again next spring:

1. First, remove any dead leaves from the plants growing around your pond. Give bog plants, like irises and taro, a good inspection and clip off any unhealthy growth, spent leaves or blooms. You want your plants to go into winter as healthy as possible so they emerge strong and stout in the spring.

2. Next, pull on your waders and tend to your hardy water lilies. Pull them out of your pond and trim them to about 3 inches above the root system. When you're done, move the pots or baskets to 18 inches deep or lower, where they'll be warm and safe from winter frost.

3. If you have tropical and floating aquatic plants, like tropical lilies or lotus, it's easiest to treat them as annuals: Remove them from your pond and mulch the soil and root balls. In most climates, they won't survive the cold winter conditions. You can try to overwinter them in your shed or garage, but it can be difficult, as many of the tropical varieties require temperatures above 60 degrees Fahrenheit and strong light to survive.

4. Treat floating aquatic plants, like water hyacinth and lettuce, as annuals, too. Fortunately, they're relatively inexpensive to replace year after year.

5. For hardy lotus, trim back the foliage after they have gone dormant and turned brown. Don't trim them while the plant and leaves are still green, as it can cause it to be susceptible to diseases that creep in through the hollow stems. In cooler climates, move your plants to a cool, but frost-free area in your yard or the bottom of your pond, along with your water lilies.

Depending on the size of your pond and the number of plants you have, this winterizing chore shouldn't take longer than an afternoon, but you'll be rewarded in the spring with healthy growth that will once again beautify your outdoor living space!

Fall pond activities

Fatten up your fish

Reprinted from 9-4-01 Splash

Where did they summer go? Here we are, ready to go into October already! Most of us will be seeing a decline of temperatures soon, so it is time to get the fish in the pond ready for their dormancy.

The fish should be fed a good and plentiful diet right now, because they need to accumulate body fat to live off during the winter and the pond should have a good bacterial culture by now that can easily handle any

increased "output" from a little heavier feeding. Do keep an eye on nitrite levels as usual and watch the fish closely during feeding for parasites.

Thin out oxygenators

Many ponds have nice, thick growth of oxygenators, Parrots Feather, etc. by now. Some of that needs to be thinned out as the days and nights start getting cooler because it will partially die down and the decomposing organic matter will put too much of a load on the bacterial culture in the pond as the bacteria start to go dormant when the temperatures fall.

When it is time to thin out (not eliminate!) depends on the part of the country where the pond is located and how deep the pond is. Warmer layers of water in the bottom of the pond will support these plants longer than the colder layers near the top. As the temperatures start to get lower and the days get shorter these minor chores can be done a little at a time.

Don't forget to use a sturdy net to fish out leaves that have blown into the pond and soon it will be time to cover it completely with a net to prevent too many leaves falling into it.

Do blue herons fly south for the winter?

Reprinted from 10-15-09 The Pond Guy

The bane of fishpond owners, great blue herons, will make a quick meal out of pricey koi and graceful goldfish. The good news is that those in the northern swath of the United States are about to enjoy their exit – at least for the winter months.

These birds are one of the most widespread wading birds in North America. While herons' breeding range stretches from the southern Canadian provinces to southern Mexico, their wintering and permanent range extends from southeastern Massachusetts along the coastal states and west across the southern half of the United States, and into Mexico and northern South America. So when the temperatures dip, they prefer to fly south to the warmer climates.

If you live in the northern regions of New England, the Great Lakes, the Northern Plains and regions that freeze during the winter, you will see the herons fly for warmer skies. Experts report the birds migrate south from the northern portions of their breeding range beginning in September and October, with their return in mid-March.

For those who live in great blue herons' wintering and permanent range, you'll unfortunately enjoy no wintertime respite from these sushi-eating birds. Here are some ways to keep your fish safe:

- Install pond netting: A near-invisible barrier, pond nets, like the Atlantic® Pond Protector Net Kit, prevent the birds from landing in your water feature and spearing your fish. They also keep fall leaves from turning your pond into an over-sized tea pot.
- Put up a decoy: Because herons are territorial, you can place a heron decoy near your pond to dissuade others from landing. Be sure to move it periodically to keep up the appearance of a live bird.
- Spray the birds away: Motion-activated scarecrow devices, which shoot a 35-foot blast of water at any animal that breaches its sensor sweep, make excellent deterrents for not only heron, but raccoon and other predators, too.

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

Calendar of Events

Oct. 3 – Apple Fest
Oct. 20 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting
Nov. 17 – Monthly TAWGS Meeting

Work Days

Mary Weaver is heading a group to help with weeding, etc. at Ward Meade Park. Please meet her at WMP at 7:30 a.m. on Saturdays if you can help out.

Julie Trowbridge is asking for volunteers at the Ted Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee. Work days are Tuesday's and Thursday's. Meet at the covered bridge 9:00 – 11:30.

Your Dues are Due if your label reads 7-10, 8-10, 9-10 or 11-10

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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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.