



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 14, Issue 3

April 1, 2011

Minutes 3-17-11

Vice President Bob Saathoff called our meeting to order at 7 p.m. since our president, Don Taliaferro was sick. After self-introductions, Bob introduced our speaker for the evening: Vivien Smith, Horticulturist from Topeka Public Works Dept. She spoke on uses for rain gardens – specifically on the project on Jackson Street which began in 2003. She explained that in 1972 the Clean water Act passed, requiring cities like Topeka to reduce the harmful pollution in stormwater runoff, so the Jackson Street Drainage project started to show the city is using alternative methods to solve flooding and stormwater pollution problems. To treat runoff before it traveled to the stormwater system, the west lane of traffic was removed and a series of bio-retention cells combined with standard underground stormwater system was constructed in its place. The cells were planted with a mixture of trees, shrubs and grasses native to Kansas, along with various wildflowers. This system helps improve runoff by slowing down the velocity of the water, filtering out harmful pollutants and reducing the chance of flooding by lowering the amount of stormwater that enters the storm sewer. A bio-retention cell is a shallow basin planted with native grasses, trees and shrubs. These cells collect stormwater and hold it for a short period of time, allowing some of the water to be naturally absorbed by the soil. The pollutants in the water are removed through various plant and soil processes and the remaining runoff travels to the city's stormwater system and flows to the Kansas River.

After our very interesting presentation we had delicious snacks provided by Mary Weaver and Linda Reynolds. They were delicious and we thank them very much. Don and Sandy Regier will provide the snacks for the April meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of our February meeting as written in the Lily Pad by Duane Eberhardt. Mark Weaver seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer Jim Green reported that we have \$1,732.63 in the bank. Duane Eberhardt made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Mark Weaver seconded. Motion carried.

Mary Weaver suggested we set aside \$200 for the garden show next year so we would have a little money to work with. Mary Weaver thanked all the volunteers who had helped at the Lawn and Garden

Monthly Meeting
7:00 p.m., April 20
Historic Old Prairie Town
(formerly Ward Meade Park)
Park in the Clay Parking Lot and walk
to the meeting room because the park
will be closed for Tulip Time.

Show and thanked Mark Weaver for being chairperson.

Phil Thompson offered suggestions for the Pond Tour in 2011 that included:

1. Deciding tonight to have or not have the pond tour
2. Having someone in charge of finding 6 ponds
3. Not having any advertising and make contractors pay for their own signs if they want them at the ponds
4. Someone to make flyers, with addresses of ponds on front and map on the back
5. No posters. Just information sheet to be handed out to retailers

Mary Weaver volunteered to get 6 ponds and Mark Weaver will work on the flyers, along with the rest of our group helping. There will be a meeting on April 6 at 7:00 at Bakers Dozen Donut Shop at 21st and McAllister. The more that come the better, as sub committees will be set up for the pond tour.

Jim Green made a motion that the pond tour be July 9th and 10th and that ticket prices be \$5.00. Duane Eberhardt seconded. Motion carried.

Bob Saathoff told us that Ray Schroeder is working 3 days a week for the city now. Ray wanted to know if TAWGS wanted to sponsor a tulip bed for Tulip Time. The cost would be \$100 and our name would stay on the bed until next Tulip time. Sponsorships are sold each year before Tulip Time and the tulips are sold after Tulip Time. With the sponsorships and the tulips sold after, the city about breaks even. Jim Green made a motion to approve this and Cheryl Saathoff seconded. Motion carried.

Mary Weaver said after Tulip Time is over, we will start pulling weeds at Old Prairie Town and Bob Saathoff said the lower end of Anna's pond needs to be

drained and cleaned. There will be more on this at our next meeting.

Mark Weaver said he got a call from Betty Karnes. She would love to have a pondless water feature in her yard. Several volunteered to help with that. Duane Eberhardt made a motion to do this and Ed Klum seconded. Motion carried. Mark said it would probably take about a half day and that we could probably do this in May or June.

Tom Platis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim Green seconded. Motion carried.

Secretary Sandy Regier

Moisture loving plants

By Duane VanDolah

Cat Whiskers *Orthosiphon aristatus*



Sometimes called Java Tea, this tropical herbaceous perennial is native to China, Taiwan, Australia, and Southeast Asia. Its water requirements are listed as medium to heavy in well-drained soil. So placing the plant in a rain garden, moist bog, or next to a splashing water feature should keep it healthy and happy. The leaves are shiny medium green, 2-4 inches long, and are coarsely toothed edges. The square stem is a reddish-brown and finely downed, that reaches 3-4 feet high. The flowers form on the last 6 inches of the stem. The tubular flowers form pagoda-shaped clusters and the stamens of each flower extends 2-2 1/2 inches out of the throat to give them a whisker look, hence the name "cat whiskers"

The color of the flowers can be white to lavender to purple. The width is 3 feet and spreads by seeds or branches that make contact with the ground and take root. Blooming time is late summer into early fall. The plant is considered hardy from zones 11 to reportedly to zone 7.

With adequate water, Cat Whiskers has many medicinal properties. The tea made from its leaves is used for the treatment of kidney stones, diabetes, and arthritis. Also it is diuretic and antispasmodic. Look it up! I did! All parts of the plant are poisonous except for the leaves.

Propagation is by seeds and cuttings--Think sedum as in poking a hole in the ground and sticking in the 5 to 6 inch stem to root. It will root with well moistened soil and even in a glass of water.

Put fish back in pond

The Pond Guy 3-18-11

It is about time to get your pond up and running for the season. Your decorative pond fish may be even more excited than you are if they've been stuck inside for the winter. Before you re-introduce them to their pond you will want to give it thorough once-over to make sure the pond is

healthy, clean and ready for spring.

You may choose to perform a complete pond cleanout and start from scratch, or if you prefer you can leave the pond in tack and just do some minor preparations. If this is the case, start by removing debris and algae from the water column, stream, rocks and pond bottom. Dusting Pond Logic® Oxy-Lift™ Defense® on your rocks and waterfall will lift hard to remove debris and save you the time and energy of having to scrub them clean. You can don a pair of Aquatic Gloves or use a Pond Vacuum and go to work removing the muck and debris that have sunk to the bottom of your pond.

Once you have removed as much solid debris as possible you can perform a partial water change of around 25%. Include a dose of Pond Logic® Stress Reducer Plus or Water Conditioner to neutralize harmful water contaminants. Inspect your filter media for signs of wear and tear and replace as necessary. Thoroughly rinse off soiled filters and seed them with PL Gel Bacteria so they are ready to work as soon as you reinstall them in your filters. If you brought your Pressurized Filters, UV Clarifiers and Water Pumps inside for the winter you begin to bring them out and install them now. With your pond cleaned out and filtration system in place you are ready to fire up your pumps and circulate the water in your pond. Add your seasonal cool-weather bacteria like Pond Logic® Seasonal Defense to further establish beneficial bacteria in your filtration media and pond.

Let the pond circulate over the course of a few weeks if possible before adding your fish. This will ensure your fish don't suffer from peaks in pH or ammonia while your water finds a happy balance. Ideally temperatures over 50 degrees are more easily adaptable for your fish but be sure you acclimate them to the pond slowly following the same process you would to introduce a few fish. Using Pond Logic® Stress Reducer Plus will aid in this process.

A good spring clean out will set the pace for your ponding season and prevent future headaches and stressed fish. Be patient and thorough using the proper tools so you can make your pond even more enjoyable this coming season.

Adding gravel to your pond



The Pond Guy 3-25-11

Adding gravel to the bottom of your water garden can help create a more natural appearance than the plain black plastic or rubber liner you are looking at now. The small stones create an excellent source of surface area for beneficial bacteria such as Pond Logic® Muck Defense™ to colonize and filter your pond water. Aquatic plants can

also benefit from the gravel base by anchoring themselves within the gravel and establish a root system beneath the rocks, safe from curious or hungry decorative pond fish.

A common question customers ask is if added gravel will actually cause more maintenance. This is not really the case. Adding gravel in your pond actually hides muck so it is not always visible, creates additional surface area for bacteria to accumulate in order to keep your pond muck free and provides a more natural landscape look actually brightening your pond's bottom and helping to make your fish more visible.

Addition of gravel to your pond is a quick and easy transition. Ideally you will want to add a layer of stones that is 1-2 inches deep. Making the gravel any deeper will allow muck and debris to settle between the stones and out of reach from the natural bacteria. Choose stones that are smooth and rounded so there are no added risks of sharp edges which could puncture the liner. Also make sure the stones you add are not too small such as pea gravel which would get packed together trapping in debris or be picked up by pond vacuums or other maintenance tools. Ideally you will be looking for stones around 1" in diameter. Proper planning and installation is the key to successfully having gravel in your pond, and following the guidelines above will ensure your success

Plant Easter lilies outside

March April Extension News

Gardeners often hate to throw out Easter lilies after they finish blooming and may wonder if they can grow outside. Though not reliably hardy in Kansas, many gardeners have success if they follow a few simple rules.

1. After the flowers have faded, remove the flower stalk so that energy does not go into making seed.
2. Keep the plant inside until the danger of frost is past. Keep soil moist but never waterlogged. Don't allow water to sit in the tray. Continue to fertilize.
3. The pot can be moved outside when frost is no longer a concern. Sinking the pot into the soil up to the brim and placing in dappled shade will help reduce watering. Continue to water and fertilize until the top growth dies down.
4. Choose a sunny, well-drained spot for planting. Good drainage is vital for lilies, so the addition of organic matter is usually necessary for most soils. Till or dig the soil six inches deep and add three inches of peat moss. Mix the soil and peat moss together. This will form a berm that should drain very well.
5. Plant the bulbs six inches deep and 12 to 18 inches apart and water in well. Mulch to conserve moisture. New growth may appear later in the summer, or the plant may stay dormant until the following spring.
6. Cover the plants in the fall after the foliage has died down with straw, pine needles, wood chips or other types of mulch to help protect the plant

over winter. Use four inches of straw or three inches of any of the other materials.

7. Uncover the plants in the spring to allow new growth to appear, and fertilize according to soil test.

Extension gardening calendar

Use the "squeeze test" before attempting to till garden soil. If soil forms a wet mud ball in your hand, it is too wet to work. If the soil ball crumbles when light pressure is applied from the sides, it should be okay.

Prune summer blooming shrubs such as blue mist spirea, crape myrtle, spirea bumalda, beauty berry, butterfly bush and Annabelle hydrangea while they are still dormant. Wait to prune early spring flowering shrubs (ones that bloom before the first of April) until after they have boomed.

Spray apple trees for insects and diseases before the "pink" stage (color showing on swollen flower buds). Do not apply insecticides during bloom, or visiting bees will be killed; don't apply carbaryl (seven) to apple trees before June 1 or the fruit may abort.

Plant ground covers where shade and root competition interfere with turfgrass establishment.

Hand pick bagworms that over-wintered on ornamental shrubs. Each over-wintering female bag may contain 500 or more eggs, so this effort is justified.

Plant a tree in honor of National Arbor Day, Friday April 29.

Spring start up guide

Reprinted from Pond Market

Are your pond and fish ready for spring? It's been a long winter and spring is finally here. Use the pond spring start-up tips below to help your get your pond in shape for many pleasurable days and nights ahead.

1. Remove pond netting or winter cover.
2. Remove debris from pond bottom with a skimmer or pond vac.
3. Skim leaf debris off of the pond surface.
4. Test ph and adjust as necessary.
5. Assure removal of remaining pond bottom sludge by adding sludge digesting beneficial bacteria.
6. Clean/replace filter media.
7. Inoculate pond filter material with beneficial bacteria.
8. Test salinity - add pond salt if necessary.
9. Visually inspect pond fish for disease & parasites.
10. Inspect pond equipment for worn and/or unsafe parts.
11. Replace pond UV and pond light bulbs.
12. Add a barley product to prevent string algae.
13. Prepare plants by re-potting if necessary & adding aquatic plant fertilizer
14. Begin feeding pond fish Spring & Fall fish food once water temperature reaches 50 degrees F.

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

2011 Calendar of Events

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| April 9-26 | Tulip Time |
| April 20 | Monthly Meeting |
| May 18 | Monthly Meeting |
| June 15 | Monthly Meeting |
| June 25-26 | TBA Tour |
| July 9-10 | Topeka Pond Tour |
| July 20 | Monthly Meeting |
| Aug. 17 | Monthly Meeting |
| Sept. 21 | Monthly Meeting |
| Oct. 19 | Monthly Meeting |
| Nov. 16 | Monthly Meeting |

Attention – Please Note!

Because of Tulip Time, TAWGS is asked to park at the Clay Parking Lot and walk to the mansion for our meeting. The front gates will be locked.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads
2-11; 3-11 or 4-11**

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

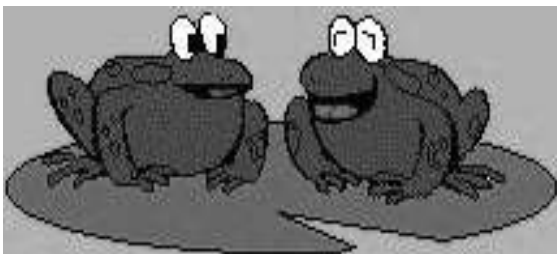
Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

THE TOPEKA AREA WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

2011 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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