



# *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 5**

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## **Zinnia cultivars attract butterflies**



*March April Shawnee Co. Extension News*

Would you like to increase the number and type of butterfly visits to your garden this year?

A recent study in the *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* (Yeagan & Colvin, 2009) evaluated four cultivars of zinnia for butterfly feeding preferences. The four widely available cultivars were *Zinnia violacea* (formerly *Zinnia elegans*) 'Lilliput', 'Oklahoma', 'State Fair', and *Zinnia marilandica* 'Pinwheel' (all mixed colors). Butterfly visits were counted both in the morning and afternoon for seven weeks in August and September (in Kentucky). Thirty different species of butterflies were identified as *Zinnia* visitors. Twice as many total butterflies visited 'Lilliput' than any of the other cultivars. Also, a greater number of butterfly species visited 'Lilliput' than visited other cultivars. *Zinnia violacea* 'Lilliput' is a truly heirloom zinnia cultivar, having been developed in the 1870's, but fortunately it remains readily available today at local stores and through internet seed sales. This cultivar should be an excellent addition to any butterfly garden.

## **TAWGS Minutes 5-18-2011**

Don Talianferro called our meeting to order with self introductions. Don asked if anyone was interested in representing TAWGS at the Garden Council. Their meetings are the first Monday of most months at 9:00 a.m. here at Old Prairie Town.

Diane Gruver suggested we check with Master Gardeners for possible speakers for upcoming meetings.

Motion was made by Bob Saathoff to approve minutes of our April meeting as written in the Lily Pad. Don Regier seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer Jim Green reported we have \$1,684.94 in the bank. Tom Routh made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Pat Routh seconded. Motion carried.

TAWGS received a letter from the Dept. of Parks & Recreation thanking us for our \$100 sponsorship of a tulip bed during Tulip Time.

TAWGS received an e-mail from the Brickyard Barn Inn wondering if the board members would like to meet there and/or have another pot luck there like we

## **Monthly Meeting 6:30 p.m., June 15**

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

## **Fish Fry and Potluck Dinner**

Please bring your table service and a side dish to share.

had a few years ago. A date was set for August 21<sup>st</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> to have a members pond tour and end up at Brickyard Barn Inn. Don will talk to them to see if either of these dates are available.

Ray Schroeder said to thank those who helped clean Anna's pond. Also, Ray wants us to set up a schedule for weeding beds around all the water features. Mary Weaver said she would be in charge of this but rather than have a list, Mary said whoever wants to show up on Saturday mornings can, but we should keep track of the time and report it to Mary to go against our debt with Parks & Recreation.

TBA will not be having a garden tour this year so it is possible the TAWGS pond tour will have more people. Mary Weaver said we have six ponds plus a bonus pond plus Waterscapes, who will be giving out a free hot dog and drink when you show your tour ticket like they did last year. Mary said she is sending a letter to the people on the pond tour inviting them to our June meeting which includes a fish fry and pot luck. At that time they can pick up their signs and flags.

Our June meeting will start at 6:30 and everybody should bring a side dish and table setting as in the past.

Mary Weaver said we would need pond sitters, but just for Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. If we get enough volunteers the time will be divided into 2 hour shifts. Linda Klem said she will call club members to see who could pond sit.

Mary Weaver said the owners of where Puddles & Pads used to be wants to tear down the pond in front of the store so they can fill in the space with dirt and plant grass. If we can get the volunteers to do this, we can keep all the material which we could use for a future project. Mary will check with them to see when we could do this and then get back to us at the next meeting.

Kip Walker is still doing business out of his garage so if anyone needs any pond supplies you can

call him and see if he has what you need. He will give members a discounted price.

Tom and Pat Routh volunteered to do refreshments for the June meeting.

Jim Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mary Weaver seconded. Motion carried.

## Water Plants

By Duane VanDolah

I've been reading about the native or naturalized wild

flowers that can be found in Kansas, and I have found quite a few that like moist-to-submerged conditions. Being from the semi-arid high plains of southwest Kansas, open water and streams are things of memory here. I know that there is a growing interest in wildflowers, and people with natural ponds and streams might consider wildflowers in the water or along the banks. You know who you are, so this is going to be the start of a series on wildflowers that grow in a moist-to-wet conditions in Kansas or call Kansas their home. If you think any of the wildflowers might work for you, try to order plants from seed catalogs or internet. Never take plants from their natural area. Collecting seed from the plant is usually alright.

### *Ditch Stonecrop*

*Penthorum sedoides*

Other common names for this plant are Star Fruit and Virginia Stonecrop. It is an erect, perennial herb, standing up to 2 ½ feet tall and a spread of 10 inches. The slender rhizomal roots form a colony but does not become invasive. The 9-inch-long, 1 ½ inch wide leaves are shiny, lanced-shaped with toothed margins. As they mature, the leaves turn an orange to reddish color. In fall the younger leaves turn a bright yellow. Small, 1/4 inch, 5 section-round flowers appear on 2-6 flower stalks on the ends of the stems, forming a star. These white, yellowish-green flowers form clusters on the stalks and have no petals, flowering during the summer. In the fall, the oblong, 5-horned fruit forms and, along with the stems, turn pink to red in color. It grows in sun-to-part shade in moist soil or water up to 4 inches deep. Zones that it lives in are zones 4-11. Propagation is by division or by seed. Native Americans used the plant to treat diarrhea, dysentery, tonsillitis, and bronchitis.

## Koi eggs in pond

*The Pond Guy 4-29-11*

If you have koi fish in your pond, there's a distinct possibility you may have koi eggs in your pond. If you don't, we may have a mystery on our hands.

For the purposes of identification, koi eggs are about the size of small beads – or small pinheads. Their color can range from milky white to greenish brown, and you'll often be able to see black dots – which are



developing koi eyes – inside them.

Fortunately, by the time you've identified the eggs, Mother Nature is already on the job. But, as a good steward to the future koi of America, you might consider adding some Aquatic Plants to the pond to provide good hiding spots for the fry. With everything from floating plants to pond flowers to submerged oxygenating plants, we have plenty of choices to keep your kiddie koi safe from predators – until they're ready to make it on their own. For an added measure of protection, consider our Koi Shelters, which provide safe havens for koi of all sizes.

Koi eggs generally hatch within a week. So, within a few days from your first sighting, you'll be graced with an abundance of koi fry. When they're first hatched, koi fry can't swim – so they attach themselves to the sides of the pond to grow. Within three or four days, your koi fry will begin to swim.

While it might be tempting to give your fry a welcome feast, there's no need. During the first stages of their development, your koi will find sufficient natural food in the pond. By the time they're approximately three to four weeks old, the koi fry should be between ¼" and ½" long – and they'll still be capable of finding sufficient natural food in the pond.

After two to three months, your fry will have reached between 2" and 3" in length. They'll continue to grow until they're between fifteen and twenty years old – so they're just getting started. And with an average lifespan of approximately fifty years, you'll have plenty of time to appreciate your koi, and the generations of offspring they're sure to produce.

## Calling all Pond Owners

*The TBA Topeka Garden Contest (including the Water Garden category) entry deadline is June 15 with judging June 27 & 28. There will be notices in the Capitol-Journal with entry forms.*

## Lava rock in biofilter

*The Pond Guy 4-29-11*

Lava rock was a common form of biological filtration media in waterfall boxes as its porous surface provides room for bacteria to reside. While it was popular years ago, pond supply companies have since produced better forms of secondary biological filtration media that are friendlier for both you and the pond itself.

Using lava rock as a source of filtration media has a list of distinctive drawbacks. The first of which is that it can prove to be extremely heavy and cumbersome. It is not exactly easy to lift a bag of rocks out of your pond, especially when it is full of water and debris.

While lava rock is porous and can initially provide a reasonable amount of additional surface area, the coarseness and small opening sizes tend to hold on to

passing-by debris, blocking the waterways which greatly diminishes the stone's performance.

Once lava rock is loaded with debris you will have to remove it from your filter box and replace it with new media as it is near impossible to remove the debris from within each rock. For some pond owners this means they would need to replace their lava rock media multiple times each season for optimal performance. Furthermore lava rock tends to be brittle and can leave behind additional dust and debris in your pond.

Biological filtration media like Pond Logic® BioBalls™ filter media provides all of the surface area that your beneficial bacteria desire but implement it into a light-weight cost-effective design. One of the best qualities of secondary filtration media like the BioBalls™ is that you only have to buy them once. Pond Logic® BioBalls™ do not degrade over time and can simply be rinsed out at the end of the season and reused the next. BioBalls™ can be placed into a mesh media bag and can be placed right into your waterfall filter box.

## What are BioBalls?



Bio balls are small, pegged plastic balls mainly used as the biological media in wet/dry filters. These little plastic bio balls have TONS of surface area for the growth of bacteria for filtration. There are approx. 80 bio balls per gallon. They are used as the biological media in salt water and fresh water aquariums as well as ponds. They are really simple to use: place into a mesh bag and drop into the pond filter. Do not clean the bioballs once they are cycled, or you will risk killing off all the beneficial bacteria that you need to filter your water. Another use for bioballs: fill your tank's overflow box. They will keep your snails and other animals from going down the overflow as well as quiet the overflow greatly.

The Gruvers use some sort of plastic strips, like strips for shipping, and they work very well. So light for Floyd to lift out of the biofalls.

## Dividing bog plants

*The Pond Guy 5-12-11*

Let's start at the beginning: why do we want bog plants in the first place? At the risk of stating the obvious, it's pretty simple. First, the right mixture of bog plants look downright beautiful, adding color, texture and interest to any backyard water garden. Second, bog plants are vital to a healthy pond ecosystem. They produce oxygen, thrive on fish waste and other organic matter, and provide foolproof hiding places for fish to evade predators. Finally, bog plants deliver lots of satisfaction – with very little effort. They're tremendously forgiving, they often grow quickly, and they're the key to transforming a quiet pond into a vibrant backyard vista.

But too much of a good thing, is, well, too much – whether you're talking about dessert, out of town

guests, and yes, even bog plants. Which conveniently brings us to question number two: why divide bog plants in the first place? The answer lies in one of their finest attributes: they're hearty – and they love to grow. When left unchecked, some varieties of bog plants can literally take over a pond, blocking light and turning the water body into a floating jungle, unfit for fish, fowl and other beneficial plants. So, rather than allowing your most opportunistic bog plants to take over, we strongly encourage our customers to divide them, leaving just enough to ensure healthy growth.

Determining when to divide your plants is fairly straightforward. If plants begin to outgrow the pot in which they're planted, the odds are good they need some breathing room. Root bound bog plants don't perform as well as those with room to stretch out their rhizomes, and they often show their dissatisfaction by producing more leaves – and fewer buds and flowers.

And with that, we've arrived at the sixty-four thousand dollar question, exactly how does one successfully divide the bog plants in a water garden? Roll up your pant legs, grab a few supplies, and we'll walk you through it, step by step:

**Step One:** Identify the plants you're planning to separate, and remove them from the pond. This step requires some judgment, depending on the means used to contain the plants in the first place. If they're in floating planters, simply bring the planter to shore. If they're rooted beneath the surface in a submersible planter – or without any planter at all – you may need to get your feet and/or arms wet. Take proper precautions, make sure there's help nearby, and make a splash.

**Step Two:** Separate the roots. Once you have your target plant on shore, take some time – and abundant care – and gently separate the root cluster to divide the portion of the plant you'll put back from the portion that's moving out.

**Step Three:** Replant the selected portion of the plant. Since you're making the effort to maintain your water garden, this is a good time to consider using our Laguna Submersible Pond Planters or our Floating Island Pond & Water Garden Planters. These innovative planters help to contain your plants, making them much easier to maintain. And when you replant, be sure to line your plant baskets and floating planters with Microbe-Lift Aquatic Planting Media. This innovative media includes beneficial bacteria to help keep the pond clear without promoting algae growth, while absorbing excess alkalinity to enhance overall water quality. The media also helps to reduce transplant shock, which significantly improves transplant success.

**Step Four:** Fertilize. To further enhance the odds of a successful transplant, we strongly recommend our Laguna Temperature Activated Aquatic Plant Fertilizer Spikes and our Tetra Pond Lily Grow Aquatic Plant Food Fertilizer Tablets. Scientifically formulated to produce stronger, more vibrant plants, both products are low in phosphorous, and have no adverse effect on water quality or fish health.

**Step Five:** Reuse the leftovers. Once you've divided your plants, you'll probably be reluctant to throw them on the compost heap. Instead, consider planting



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

## 2011 Calendar of Events

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

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### Continued from page 3

some of the excess roots in a floating planter for added surface coverage. Or, if you'd prefer to add a little life elsewhere around your home, simply plant some of the remaining roots in a regular pot or planter to brighten up the porch, the patio, or even the living room.

Give your green thumb a whirl. You'll be glad you did.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
 4-11, 5-11 or 6-11**

**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](http://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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