



# 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 10

Nov. 1, 2011



**Melody Weller shows her favorite feeder, a tray feeder.**

### Attracting birds to your backyard

"It is fun to attract birds year around," Melody Weller from Wild Bird House said. "We feed birds because we enjoy them."

There are several things that you can do to attract birds to your backyards:

- Plant shrubs with birds in mind - shrubs that produce seeds and berries
- Wait until spring to cut down flowers that have gone to seed, so birds will have seeds to eat during the winter
- Have a variety of feeders available

There is a pecking order with birds, Melody said, so if you have several feeders the smaller birds will have an opportunity to feed too.

Melody said her favorite feeder is a tray feeder. "It is very bird friendly," she said. "You may have to brush snow off during the winter, but rain is okay, because they have a screen bottom."

If you feed only one seed, the best seed to feed is plain black oil sunflowers. Everybody likes it! Even little birds like it.

A House Mix is also popular. It consists of black oil sunflower seed, gray stripe sunflower seeds and safflower seeds.

Squirrels don't like safflower seeds, neither do black birds so that would be a good choice if you are trying to eliminate them from your feeders. Top seeds that birds like are white millet, cracked corn and peanut

**Monthly Meeting**  
**6:30 p.m., Wed., Nov. 16**  
**Historic Old Prairie Town**  
**124 NW Fillmore**  
**Pot Luck & Election of Officers**  
Bring a covered dish and your table service

pieces. All birds like bugs!

Goldfinches are here year round, but you don't always see them. They are bright yellow in the summer time but they have already molted now and are almost an olive color. They especially like niger (thistle) which is usually imported. It is heat treated to keep it from sprouting but it also gives it a shorter shelf life. The birds won't eat it if it isn't good. October is a slow month for gold finches but they will get busy in November.

Suet feeders are great feeders in the winter months. They are high fat, high energy food. Woodpeckers also love suet.

Feeders for clinging birds are available. There are also seed blocks for clinging birds.

We think of bluebirds when we think of meal worms, but lots of birds will eat them. Birds flock in the winter because it helps them to find feeders. That is why we usually see several bluebirds together during the winter.

February and March are good months to feed fruit because birds that eat insects and berries are hungry since those food sources are depleted by then.

It is good to have a heated bird bath during the winter because birds even bathe in the winter. Melody said that 150 watt heaters work best in this area. A 60 watt heater won't keep the water thawed. Leave bird houses up for roosting in the winter.

Other tips that Melody gave were:

- Use baffles to keep squirrels and raccoons out of your feeders
- Make sure the feeders are far enough away so they can't jump from a tree or fence to the feeder
- Clean feeders regularly - usually once a month. Give them a good cleaning twice a year
- Don't put feeders in a flower bed or near bushes because cats can hide in them, making the birds

an easy prey

- Put bat houses a minimum of 15 feet high and mount them facing east

Wild Bird House is a licensed wild bird rehabilitation center so if you find an injured bird or have questions you can give them a call.

## TAWGS Minutes 10-17-11

Don Taliaferro called our meeting to order with self introductions.

Melody and Todd Weller from Wild Bird House gave a very interesting talk on how to attract birds into our backyards.

We thank Mary Weaver for the delicious refreshments.

Jim Green reported we have \$2,592.26 in our checking account. Mary Weaver made a motion to approve treasurers report. Tom Platis seconded. Motion carried.

Jim Green reported that it would cost between \$200 - \$400 to bring us current with the state and federal government to get our name back and maintain our tax exempt status. Floyd Gruver made a motion for Jim Green to pay what we need to make us current. Diane Gruver seconded. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Diane Gruver to override our bylaws so we can do elections and installation of officers for next year, next month. Bill Kraus seconded. Motion carried.

Bob Saathoff reported that the following people have been nominated for officers for 2012: Jim Green, Treasurer, Bob Saathoff, Vice President, Amy Thompson, Secretary.

Tom Platis thanked all who helped at Apple Fest. We thank Tom for heading this committee.

Don Taliaferro is looking for someone to be chairperson for the Pond Tour and the Lawn and Garden Show in 2012.

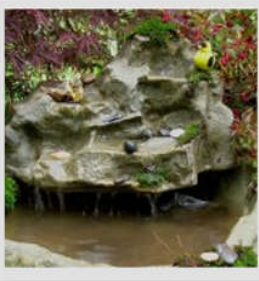
Bob Saathoff said we should owe nothing to the city now as hours volunteered at Old Prairie Town should have finished paying off the debt.

Our meeting next month will be a pot luck starting at 6:30.

Tom Platis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phil Thompson seconded. Motion carried.

Sandy Regier Secretary

P.S. Don Taliaferro later agreed to run for president.



## What causes brown water

### *The Pond Guy 10-13-11*

Before that question can be answered, you'll have to do some sleuthing.

Why? Because water that looks brown many not actually be brown. Fortunately, there's a simple way to

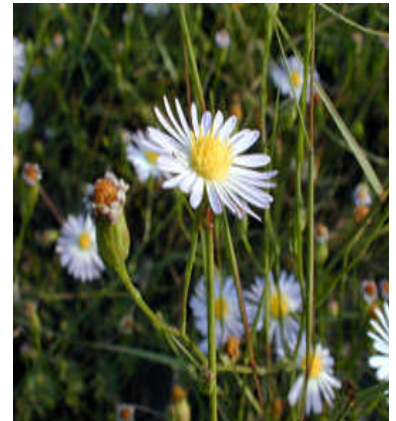
figure it out - and there are simple ways to clear up the issue - regardless how the test turns out. The test, of course, is highly scientific, so pay careful attention to the following steps: Get a clear glass from your kitchen cabinet. Take the glass to your pond, and scoop it full of pond water. Look at the water in the glass. Whew. Good work. Now that you've completed the heavy lifting, consider the water you're observing. If it's clear, you've learned that the brown you're seeing is nothing more than the decaying leaves and debris at the bottom of your pond. To remedy that problem, you'll want to introduce the natural bacteria in Pond Logic® Muck Defense and Pond Logic® Nature Defense to your pond. These safe, hungry and beneficial bacteria will expedite the breakdown of pond bottom debris, leaving the bottom of your pond as clean as your water is clear. If, however, the contents of your glass are brown, you're facing a high concentration of tannins, which are released into pond water by decomposing leaves. Fortunately, our Pond Logic® Activated Carbon does a terrific job of absorbing pesky tannins, leaving your water crystal clear. Simply place Activated Carbon in a mesh bag close to a high-flow area (like a skimmer or a waterfall), and wait for it to absorb the offending discoloration.

## Moisture loving plants

by Duane VanDolah

### Saltmarsh Aster

*Aster Sabulatus*



The aster is from the sunflower family and the Saltmarsh aster is an annual herb found in low, wet areas such as brackish water and salty marshes. It grows to a height between 4-40 inches tall and an 18 inch spread. The small ½ to 1 inch flowers have a yellow disc-like center with short ray petals that are white, pink or light purple. The single stems have multiple branches at the top which holds the flowers. The fleshy, 6-inch leaves are narrow and tapered at each end. Flowers bloom in August through October. This Aster grows in dry-to-very moist soil, even salty conditions with sunny-to-part sunlight. A bath made up of stems and flowers of this Aster was believed to relieve rheumatism. Propagation is by seed.

## Apple Fest successful

Beautiful weather and a great crowd helped make the 2011 Historic Old Prairie Town Apple Fest a success.

Several TAWGS members helped Chairman Tom Platis and Helen pull it off.

Many thanks to: Sue Mowder, Duane Eberhardt,

Don and Ruth Taliaferro, Floyd and Diane Gruver and Jack Ramsey who all worked shifts during the day.

A special thanks goes to Sandy and Don Regier who helped all day and to Tom who agreed to chair the committee.



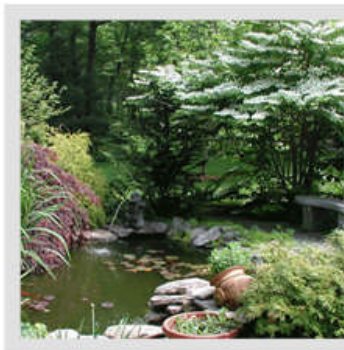
Ruth Taliaferro, Helen Platis and Don Taliaferro have fun dishing up beans and sauerkraut at the 2011 Apple Fest.

## Pine needles in your pond

*The Pond Guy 11-12-2010y*

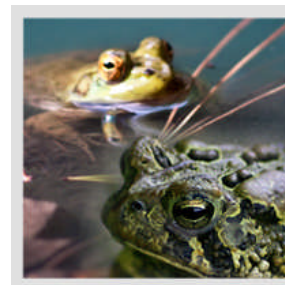
Your evergreens may hold on to their color during the winter but they will have no trouble shedding a few pine needles. If your pond is pine tree adjacent you most likely have been dealing with the presence of pine needles in your water. Your pine trees can provide an excellent source of shade and privacy but do the negative effects of loose pine needles put your pond or fish in harms way?

As you already know, an abundance of organic debris in your pond can lead to algae blooms, turbid water and unbalanced water chemistry. Organic matter like grass clippings or leaves from nearby trees will eventually turn into an intimidating layer of muck if left at the bottom of your pond. Unlike leaves pine needles are not a huge contributor of tea colored water however, pine needles are acidic and can lower the pH of your pond water to an unhealthy level if left to accumulate. Because of their size, shape and density pine needles are a bit trickier to catch and clean out of your pond. They can easily fall through netting with larger openings and they tend to clog up pond vacuum hoses. To better protect your pond from fallen pond needles use Pond Netting <http://www.thepondguy.com/category/water-gardens-and-features-pond-netting> with smaller mesh holes. As pine



needles tend to float for a while make sure your Skimmer is active and running to help catch as much debris as possible. Your skimmer may require more frequent cleaning to prevent loss of water flow. Any needles that venture to the bottom of the pond can be rounded up with a Skimmer Net and your Pond Vac or you can don a pair of Aquatic Gloves and scoop up any large deposits that form. While pine needles decompose a bit slower than leaves beneficial bacteria products like Seasonal Defense will help break them down and remove any strays you might have missed.

To be fair to all of the evergreens out there, pine needles are not any more harmful than leaves; they just come with their own unique set of challenges. At the end of the day you treat them just like you would any other form of unwanted excess organic material. Keep your pond clean and it will keep you happy, whether you have pine trees, oak trees or no trees at all!



## What happens to frogs and toads during the winter

*The Pond Guy 10-20-2010*

As the temperatures continue to drop you will begin to notice that your pond, once full of life, is now starting to look like abandoned arctic tundra. Gone are the cool summer nights spent on your patio and deck watching fireflies tastefully illuminate your lawn while being serenaded by a choir of frogs and crickets.

While you are inside cuddled under blankets for the season where do your web-footed friends spend their winter? The winter retreat of choice will depend on the type of frog you have hanging around your pond. You will commonly find either some variety of frog frequenting the shallow areas or shoreline of your pond and toads farther inland rummaging about your gardens or front lawn. Both are very similar but can usually be identified by a few visual characteristics. Frogs tend to have smooth glossy skin that feels slimy to the touch while toads have dry lumpy skin. The eyes of a frog tend to protrude further from its head than those of a toad. A toad will usually have poison sacks located behind their eyes which help prevent them from becoming a snack for larger predators.

As frogs are cold blooded they will begin to slow down as their body temperatures drop. When winter arrives they will go into a state of dormancy and wait out the cold weather. The hibernation strategy varies between species of frogs. Toads tend to bury themselves in leaves or mud while frogs can pass the winter at the bottom of your pond below the ice. Frogs produce a type of glucose in their bodies that will allow them to freeze solid and still be able to survive. As the temperatures begin to rise in the spring their hearts will begin to beat again and they will begin to thaw. When they are once again mobile they will actively **Go to Pg 4**

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

**Frogs and Toads continued**

search for a place to mate.

Since frogs have an arsenal of survival skills to get them through the winter there is not much you have to do to help them survive the cooler months. Instead focus on keeping yourself warm and healthy and try your best to enjoy the snow and beautiful landscapes this winter brings.

**Calendar of Events**

Nov. 16 2012	Monthly Meeting
Feb. 8	Monthly Meeting
March 21	Monthly Meeting
April 18	Monthly Meeting
May 16	Monthly Meeting
June 20	Monthly Meeting
July 18	Monthly Meeting
Aug. 15	Monthly Meeting
Sept. 19	Monthly Meeting

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

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

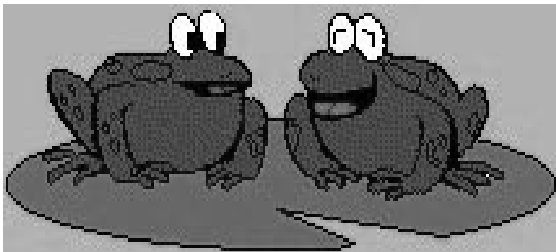
Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW  
Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

**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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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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