



# *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 15, Issue 10**

**Nov 1, 2012**



**Tom Garcia shows the root growth of a plant that is being raised hydroponically.**

## **What's new on 61st ST**

It took 8 years for Tom and Bobbi Garcia to get to where they are now at Blue Acres. "I have a passion for marine aquatics," Tom said. "I needed a greenhouse for the coral and tropical fish I had at home."

They found a greenhouse at the old Hynerks location so they purchased it in 2004. They opened the nursery for a short time but road construction on Wannamaker caused them to close. They realized they could not compete with the big box stores in nursery stock when they opened again recently, so they decided to go in a different direction. They now specialize in water gardens, fresh and saltwater fish, corals and aquaponics.

Tom is pretty excited about his setup for hydroponics and aqua culture (growing fish). The advantages are: don't have to water; no soil pests; fish waste provides nutrients for the plants; don't need a rototiller; no back pain and can eat the fish when they mature.

Tom built a trough system drain with a PVC pipe fence post, capped at both ends, with small holes for water to enter and exit. He then drilled holes on one side that are big enough to set a 2" - 3" plastic basket down into. The water is pushed with a pump in the fish tank to flow through the trough, thereby watering the plants. They have experimented with and had good luck growing cucumbers, beans, tomatoes, peppers, strawberries, and lettuce. Some plants do better in the water than others.

## **Monthly Meeting**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Nov. 14, 2012**

**Historic Old Prairie Town  
124 NW Fillmore**

**Pot Luck - Bring a covered dish  
and your table service**

**Note change of date and time**

He has also found a larger pot with a hole on the side at the bottom where larger vegetable plants, such as tomatoes, do better when their roots reach 8" - 10" deep. He uses hydra tone (clay pellets), which replaces the soil in the larger pots. He uses indiscriminate tomato plants which will continue to bear fruit (his favorite is Super Sweet 100 cherry tomato.)

Tom uses tilapia fish in the tanks now, but he is considering experimenting with Kio because they also produce a lot of waste. The tilapia grow from fingerlings to dinner plate size in 7 - 8 months. They cannot sell them retail because they don't have all the necessary papers to meet all the regulations for selling food.

Tom says they have about 25,000 - 30,000 gallons of water on the property. They have 3,000 gallon fish tanks which are gray/black so you can see the color of the fish, either cold water, tropical or salt water; 6,000 gallons of indoor ponds; 10,000 gallons in the retail area and 4,300 gallons for the aquaponics.

At the moment, Blue Acres (formerly Serenity Water Gardens) is only open on Saturday and Sunday since Tom still has a full time job. He is anxious to learn what we would like to see him provide.

We welcome Tom and Bobbi as new TAWGS members.

## **Pond Tip**

*Warm spells throughout the winter may tempt you to offer food to your fish. It is much safer for the fish to avoid this temptation; fish cannot properly digest food when the water temperature is below 50 degrees Fahrenheit.*

# Moisture loving plants

by Duane VanDolah

## Rocket

*Ligularia Stenocephala*



Last month concluded my articles on moisture-loving and water plants that are considered wildflowers found in the wilds of Kansas. This starts again looking at cultivars of plants we can use around and in our ponds.

I wrote about the plant *Ligularia Othello* in a past article, I'll now write about another plant in this group called *Ligularia Stenocephala*, "The Rocket". This perennial is also called the Leopard Plant. Shooting a flower spike 4-5 feet tall and covered with yellow flowers, this plant makes quite a statement in the back of the border. If planted in groups 3 feet apart, this plant is bold. This plant forms a clump with a mounding habit and with coarse, leathery, dark-green leaves, that are deep-toothed, heart-shaped and are 1 foot long and across with dark burgundy stems. Small, daisy-like, lemon-yellow flowers, 1 inch across form in clusters on 18 to 24 inches of the tall stems. Flowering is from mid summer to late summer. It needs consistent moist conditions and can never be allowed to dry out. This plant prefers semi-shade to full shade in zones 5-8. It is a good plant to attract hummingbirds. This plant looks good in groups in shade gardens and woodland areas. However, moist to wet conditions must be met by planting along streams, waterfalls, bog, or ponds.

# Overwintering tropical lilies

The Pond Guy 10-20-12

Unlike other aquatic plants that will happily overwinter in the deeper regions of your pond, tropical water lilies need special care.



Here are six steps to follow when putting your blooming beauties to bed for the season.

**1. Slow the Growth:** First, when the air temperatures start to cool (like right about now ...), slow down or stop fertilizing the lilies to slow the plant's growth. This allows the plant to naturally slow its metabolic processes and more easily transition into winter. If you abruptly stop fertilizing and remove the plant from the pond, you could shock the lily and damage it.

**2. Deadhead and Remove Foliage:** Next, using your Coralife® Aqua Gloves™ and Pond Scissors and

Pliers, snip off all lily pads and blooms from the lily tuber once your pond's water temperatures start to dip below 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Besides looking unsightly, the spent flowers and foliage will start to wilt and should be removed to reduce waste material.

**3. Remove and Rinse:** Once you've cleaned up the plant, gently remove the lily tuber from pond and rinse it off in a bucket or with your garden hose. Trim off any straggling foliage with your pond scissors.

**4a. Bury Tuber in Moist Sand:** To keep the tuber moist and healthy during the winter, fill a sealable container with moist (but not too wet!) sand and bury it, covering it lightly with sand. Moist sand will hold moisture to keep tuber from completely drying—but if the sand is too wet, the tuber may rot.

**4b. Submerge Tuber, Place Under Grow Light:** Another overwintering option is to fill a container with distilled water and place the tuber under a grow light in a room that's a comfortable 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The lily will continue to grow slowly through the winter months.

**5. Safely Store and Inspect Often:** If you choose the sand-storage option, store the container in a cool, dark place like a basement—but make sure it's not too warm or too cold. If it's too warm, the tuber may start to grow or rot; if it's too cold, the tuber may freeze. Check on the tuber often to make sure the sand is still moist and the tuber is not rotting.

**6. Replant in the Spring:** Once pond water temperatures return to 70 degrees Fahrenheit in the spring, haul your container to the pond, pull out the tuber and replant it in the pond. Don't forget to add a dose of fertilizer to jump-start the growing season!



Pat Routh and Bob Saathoff Saathoff dip sauerkraut for Apple Fest as Cheryl Saathoff looks on.

# Apple Fest cool this year

Many thanks to the folks that volunteered for Apple Fest Oct 7th. Jackets were the order of the day because the weather was a bit nippy.

Volunteers included: Mary Weaver, Don & Sandy Regier, Tom & Pat Routh, Sue Mowder, Cheryl & Bob Saathoff, Floyd & Diane Gruver and Don Taliaferro. Thanks everyone.





# Overwintering your fish

*The Pond Guy 10-6-12*

We all love central heating or a roaring fireplace in our homes when winter's chilly temperatures roll in, but your

pond fish—specifically your koi and common goldfish—don't need those creature comforts to stay happy and content.

## Cold Temps and Torpor

During the winter months when the water temperature is 45 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit and below, koi and goldfish enter into a dormant state. The technical term for this is torpor, and it means that the fishes' metabolism and activity slows, they become very lethargic, and they require little nourishment. In this state, the koi and goldfish will, in fact, be quite comfortable in temperatures as low as 35 degrees.

## Demystifying De-icers

If koi and goldfish don't need the water warmed, what's the deal with pond heaters and de-icers, like the Thermo-Pond, Farm Innovators, TetraPond® or Perfect Climate™ de-icers?

These tools of the trade aren't intended to turn up the heat in your pond's water. They're designed to simply melt a hole in the ice, which allows dangerous gases to escape while letting fresh and life-sustaining oxygen. When plugged into the Thermo Cube® Thermostatically Controlled Outlet, the de-icers will turn on when temps dip to 35 degrees and off when temps rise to 45 degrees on their own. To save even more on energy costs this winter, consider installing a PondAir™ & Thermo-Pond 3.0 aeration and pond de-icer combo. When used with an aeration system, you can use a lower wattage de-icer which will not need to be ran as often to maintain an open ventilation hole.

## De-icer's Limitations

But the one thing de-icers don't do: actively circulate or move the water like an aeration system does. That agitating action is necessary to trap and bring oxygen into the pond's entire water column—including the bottom, where the fishes are snoozing. It also helps to prevent ice from forming a complete sheet on the pond surface.

Though running a pump will help move the water, it doesn't agitate it enough to get those O2 levels up. A pump also costs more to operate than an aeration system, and, if ice does form, you could do some major damage to the unit from poor water flow. If you do not yet own an aeration system for your water garden, the PondAir™ & Thermo-Pond 3.0 Combo is a surefire way to protect your fish this winter.

# TAWGS minutes 9-15-12

Present: Don Taliaferro, Floyd Gruver, Diane Gruver, Phil Thompson, Amy Thompson, Bob Saathoff, Cheryl Saathoff, Don Reiger, Sandy Reiger, Linda Reynolds, Tom Platis, Helen Platis, Tom Routh, Pat Routh, Jim Green, Dona Peterson, Bill Kraus, Susan Kraus, Tina

Wesch Bobbie Garcia and Tom Garcia.

**October Program:** Tom Garcia from Blue Acres gave a presentation about aquaponics and the success he has had.

**July Minutes:** A motion was made by Pat Routh and seconded by Don Regier to approve the minutes, the motion carried.

**Treasurer's report:** Jim Green reported that the club has a bank balance of \$3,342.33. All pond tour advertisers have now paid their fees. Jim recognized Jim Mowder for his contribution in getting the IRS non-profit reinstatement documents completed and mailed. The \$400 check sent along with the IRS forms was not included in the balance above.

A motion was made by Bob Saathoff and seconded by Bill Kraus to accept the treasurer's report; the motion carried.

## Other Business

### Election of Officers

2013 State of Officers:

President - Don Taliaferro, Vice President - Open, Treasurer - Jim Mowder, Secretary - Amy Thompson

**2013 Pond Tour** – Don Taliaferro requested that a date be sent for the 2013 Pond Tour. He shared with the membership that Topeka Beautiful Association had selected June 21 & 22 for the Garden Tour. Friday night only they intend to host a special event, Saturday there will be three additional houses on the tour and tickets will be \$8 each. TBA also changed their contest from six categories to – overall, shade and sun.

The lack of pond sitters was discussed and how if you are showing your home on the pond tour, you should not be the sitter for it as well. The membership is hoping for 8-10 homes for the pond tour.

A motion was made by Diane Gruver and seconded by Phil Thompson to hold the annual Pond Tour on June 29 & 30. The motion passed.

**Children's Discovery Center Project** – Bob Saathoff shared that the Topeka's Children's Discovery Center recently received a grant for \$65,000 to build educational water features at the center. Bob and Eric Wood met with the center's staff and discussed possibilities. Bob will report back to the membership what they would like for our participation to be in the project.

A motion was made by Jim Green and seconded by Bob Saathoff to participate in the project if the center would allow their water feature to be on the 2013 pond tour. The motion carried.

## New Business

John Bell, Operations Manager for the Apple Festival sent a thank you letter to TAWGS, thanking them for their participation in this year's festival.

A motion was made by Phil Thompson and seconded by Sandy Reiger to move the date of the February TAWGS meeting to Feb. 6. The change will make it such that there is not a meeting the week of the Flower Lawn and Garden show. The motion passed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Tom Platis and seconded by Bill Kraus. The motion carried.

The next meeting is 6:30 p.m., Nov. 14 at Old Prairie Town. Bring your table service and a covered dish to share. Amy Thompson, Secretary

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

Nov. 14 Monthly Meeting &  
 Potluck Dinner at 6:30

**2013**

February 6 Monthly Meeting  
 March 20 - Monthly Meeting  
 April 17 Monthly Meeting  
 May 15 Monthly Meeting  
 June 19 Monthly Meeting  
 June 29-30 Annual Pond Tour  
 July 17 Monthly Meeting  
 August 21 Monthly Meeting  
 September 18 Monthly Meeting  
 October 16 Monthly Meeting  
 November 13th Monthly Meeting

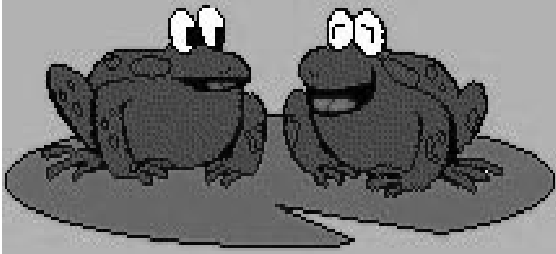
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**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
 9-12, 10-12 or 11-12**  
 Please renew as soon as possible to continue  
 receiving the newsletter.  
 Send dues to Jim Green, 5701 SW  
 Arrowhead CT, Topeka, KS 66614

**THE TOPEKA AREA  
 WATER GARDEN SOCIETY**  
 2012 OFFICERS:

Don Taliaferro Topeka	President 785-272-8348
Bob Saathoff Topeka	Vice President 785-272-7125
Amy Thompson Topeka	Secretary 785-273-7005
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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