



# *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 18, Issue 8**

**September 1, 2015**

### **Monthly Meeting**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Sept. 16, 2015**

**Mary Weaver's home - 4301 SW 17<sup>th</sup> Terrace**

**Speaker - Jamie Hancock continued**



*Griller Larry Shipman fixes hamburgers, brats and hot dogs for TAWGS members and pond hosts involved in the 2015 Topeka Pond Tour.*

## **Post Pond Tour party held**

Great food, great fellowship and great weather. That pretty much describes the party that Barb and Larry Shipman hosted in their beautiful back yard for everyone involved in helping make the Topeka Pond Tour successful this year. A large crowd of pond hosts, pond sitters and tour committee members enjoyed the delicious pot luck dinner on Shipman's large deck, screened porch and pond side. Many thanks to the Shipman's for hosting this party and to everyone involved to make the pond tour possible this year.



*Larry and Lois Dittmer, Tom and Pat Routh and Sandy Regier visit on Shipman's deck.*

## **TAWGS August 2015 Minutes**

President Tom Platis called the meeting to order. It was nice to welcome new members as well as past members to the group, Mr. and Mrs. Horner and Mary Weaver.

Vice-president Chris Newell introduced the speaker for the evening and welcomed Jamie Hancock. Jamie is the Horticulture Agent for Shawnee County Extension Services. Jamie's goal for the evening was to help the group bring new life to our organization. She explained the process we would be using to accomplish this goal and then we brainstormed ideas of what brought us to TAWGS each month. From these we formed the purposes or what the group wants to accomplish in the



Secretary Sherry Reed recorded ideas during the brainstorming session facilitated by Jamie Hancock at the August TAWGS meeting.

community and for ourselves. We then brainstormed how we might accomplish these goals. Jamie plans to meet with us next month to continue this process in setting up a mission statement and furthering the growth and purposes of our group.

Chris Newell made a motion to accept the minutes as reported in last month's newsletter. This was seconded by Diane Gruver. Don Taliaferro made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and this was seconded by Jim Green. Both motions carried.

Volunteer waivers and release forms were handed out to anyone interested in helping with the Apple Festival held at Ward-Meade on October 4, 2015. These need to be returned to Tom Platis by the next TAWGS meeting.

Don Taliaferro reported on the project of building the waterfall at Shawnee County Extension Office. He has three bids in for materials at WaterScapes, Jacksons and Water's Edge. Shawnee County will pay for the project, but Don suggested TAWGS give some financial support as well.

The committees for the Garden Show and the Pond Tours have not met yet. Chris Newell suggested a membership committee be established. This was tabled until next month.

Thank you Doris Hammond for the delicious treats!

Next month's meeting will be held at Mary Weaver's home at 2301 SW 17<sup>th</sup> Terr. She requests that you bring a lawn chair.

Floyd Gruver made a motion to adjourn, Chris Newell seconded this motion. Motion carried.

Let's take a look at some reasons why your water level is dropping below your skimmer opening in the first place. One of them could point to your solution.

### Reason #1: Wrong Pump Size

Skimmers are rated for maximum water flow. If your pump exceeds this rating, the water will leave the skimmer faster than it enters—and you'll be left with a low water level. Check your pump to be sure it's sized correctly for your skimmer.

### Reason #2: Accumulated Debris

Is your skimmer's filter mat plugged? Nets and media pads catch a majority of debris as the water passes through your skimmer (which you then clean out several times a year), but some of it may fall to the bottom. That debris could then plug your filter mat and prevent water from getting to your pump. It could also cause a water backup, allowing water to escape from other areas of your pond. When you pull out your filter pad, check for debris buildup in the skimmer bottom.

### Reason #3: Skimmer Height

If your skimmer is set at the wrong height, that could cause problems, too. It should be set so that the natural water line of the pond when filled is about an inch below the top of the skimmer opening. If it's set where the water level is lower, small fluctuations in the water level can make a big difference. Check your skimmer height and adjust as needed.

### Reason #4: Too-Low Overflows

If you installed an overflow in your skimmer, make sure the overflow's bottom is not lower than where the water level should be. Otherwise, you will have issues when you have small fluctuations in your pond's water level. Check to be sure any built-in overflows are positioned at the right height to allow water to drain from the skimmer.

### Reason #5: A Leak

Dropping water levels could indicate a leak, so check around your pond for pooling water. See previous newsletter for how to find and fix a leak.

### Reason #6: Evaporation

The sun's evaporation power can play a role in your waning water levels, too. If this becomes a problem over time, you can install an auto-fill valve to refill your pond when it gets low. At the very least, install an automatic shutoff switch; if water depletes to a certain point, the pump will switch off automatically.



## Water level drops below skimmer

*The Pond Guy 8-22-15*

Help! The water level in my pond keeps dropping below my skimmer opening. What should I do?

That's a problem, for sure!

## How big will koi get

*The Pond Guy 8-15-15*

In an ideal environment—a supersize space with pristine water conditions at a stable 75 degrees Fahrenheit—an adult koi can reach a

whopping 3 feet long. A yard! Nearly a full meter! Yep, that's a really big fish!





Don't worry: Chances are slim that your finned pal will grow to that immense length, but you can help it reach its full potential. Koi will keep growing and growing throughout their lives, sometimes faster than others. How fast and large they grow depend on several factors, including:

- **Water quality.** Clean water pumped full of oxygen will promote a fish's health and growth, while poor water quality can stunt its growth. Koi will tolerate a dirty, cloudy environment, but their development and vitality will suffer. Make sure you have an aeration kit in place and are using beneficial bacteria from the Defense PAC® to keep the water crystal clear.
- **Water temperature.** A steady 75°F will keep koi in a more active growth state where they're building muscle and body mass like crazy. Cooler or fluctuating water temperatures trigger a slower growth rate as they slow down their metabolism and activity level. If you live anywhere other than in the tropics, expect to see slower growth in the winter months.
- **Nutrition.** Food—and how much of it they eat—matters. Fish food that's packed with protein and vitamins is formulated to help koi grow and develop. Some also contain ingredients that boost your fish's vibrant colors.
- **Genetics.** Genes play a huge role in how large a koi could grow in the right conditions. Colossal parents often produce colossal offspring, and if those fry live in a spacious pond with clean, aerated water and good food, who knows how big they'll get!
- **Age.** Like most living things, koi develop faster when they're young and slower as they age. Your 4-inch koi quickly doubled in size because they're still adolescents; as they get older, their growth rate will slow down.

If you have big plans for your koi, give them an ideal ecosystem and good grub. Your colorful friends may not reach that 3- or 4-foot mark—but you never know!



## Helping fish that have been attacked by a heron

*The Pond Guy 8-1-15*

Ouch. A heron attack isn't pretty – and it's potentially deadly to your fish. Unfortunately, you can't call 9-1-1 or an emer-

gency fish veterinarian for a pond call, but you can try some things that could save your pet's life.

**Examine, Triage:** The first thing to do is examine the victim and do some triage. Capture the injured fish in a pond net and take a closer look at its wounds without removing it from the water. How severe is the injury? Are there just a few scrapes, or does the fish have an open wound?

1. **Minimal Injuries:** If your fish's injuries aren't too severe and it appears to be normal except for a few scrapes, leave it in the pond and add some Stress Reducer PLUS to the water. The liquid formula will help to calm the fish and rebuild its slime coat, which defends it against infection. You might also want to add some soothing salt to the water (read about it here).
2. **Remove and Isolate:** If your fish is severely injured, set up a quarantine tank with pond water and an aerator, add some Stress Reducer PLUS, put it in a shaded and protected area, and gently move the fish from the pond to the tank.
3. **Watch for Infection:** Keep an eye on your fish while it's in the quarantine tank. Because damaged tissue becomes a breeding ground for bacterial and fungal pathogens, watch for signs of infection. If you see split or ragged fins, slimy patches or red ulcers on its body, or any other unusual symptoms, use CrystalClear® Wipeout™ or PondCare® MelaFix to heal the wounds and restore damaged tissue.

While your finned friend is recovering, makes some plans for how you'll guard your pond against future attacks. A Blue Heron Decoy will dissuade the real things from stopping by for a snack. Pond netting will prevent birds from reaching the water. Floating, submerged and marginal aquatic plants give your fish somewhere to hide, as do fish shelters, like the Koi Kastle. Set your fish up for safety – especially since that heron will be back for seconds!

## Fish that won't overwinter outdoors

*The Pond Guy 10-13-12*

Koi and certain types of goldfish, like Sarassa and Shubunkins, can overwinter in your pond or water garden even when water temperatures dip to near-freezing levels. But what about other common pond fishes?

Well, it depends on your USDA hardiness zone, which divides the country into zones based on how cold the temperatures get. Just as with plants, some fish species can be "hardy" in some climates and not in others. An Oranda, for instance, might do just fine overwintering in a pond in Orlando, Fla., but up in Fargo, N.D., that same fish would turn into a popsicle—even with an aeration system and de-icer.

When the temperatures begin to fall in colder zones, here's what you do:

1. Keep a close eye on your pond's water temperature using a thermometer, like the Pond Logic® Floating Pond Thermometer. When the mercury hits 68 degrees or so, it's time to bring those less hardy fishes—including Plecostomus, Oranda, Telescope goldfish and Black Moors—inside.

**See fish on page 4**

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

August 19	Monthly Meeting
September 16	Monthly Meeting
October 4	Apple Fest
October 21	Monthly Meeting
November 18	Pot Luck
June 25-26, 2016	Topeka Pond Tour

**Fish continued from page 3**

2. Carefully scoop those snowbird fishes out of the pond with a net, like The Pond Guy® 3-in-1 Combo Net, and place them in a bucket pre-filled with some of your pond's water 3. Re-home the fishes in a properly sized indoor fish tank or aquarium outfitted with the right mechanical and biological filtration system for the job. Be sure to condition the water and pre-treat it with some beneficial bacteria to kick start the system's biological filtration, too.

As soon as sun thaws your pond water—or at least heats it back up to room temperature—it's safe to return those fishes to their "summer" home.

**Your Dues are Due if your label reads  
7-15, 8-15 or 9-15**

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

Send dues to

**Jim Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605**

**THE TOPEKA AREA  
WATER GARDEN SOCIETY**

**2015 OFFICERS:**

Tom Platis Topeka	President 785-478-9514
Chris Newell Topeka	Vice President 785-633-4854
Sherry Reed Topeka	Secretary 785-408-5060
Jim Mowder Topeka	Treasurer 785-267-0672

Meetings are usually 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 Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605



**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:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor  
408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436  
785-364-3046  
[fdgruver@embarqmail.com](mailto:fdgruver@embarqmail.com)

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