



PONDERINGS

Official Newsletter of The Tucson Watergardeners (TTW)

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www.tucsonwatergardeners.org

Lots going on!

Be sure to save the **TTW Calendar of Events**.

There's the '07 Public Tour, a Fall Potluck, General Meetings, and much more!

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Board Meeting. Thursday, August 16th 7:30 PM
Host: Ken Canada

General Meeting: Thursday, August 23rd
7:30pm @ Jr League of Tucson
2099 E River Road

Program: "Pond Biofilter Panel" by
TTW Members and Chaired by
Gail Barnhill

Refreshments: J. Canada; R. Minami

Door Prizes: Share your "extra" plants & "stuff"



Willing to serve as an
Officer or Board
Member for 2008?

With September and October bringing a close to the 2007 TTW water gardening season, it's time to look ahead to our 2008 year, beginning this November. There are six board meetings throughout the year. Now's your chance to help guide the club and enjoy the comraderie of fellow water gardeners!

Destination: Sedona

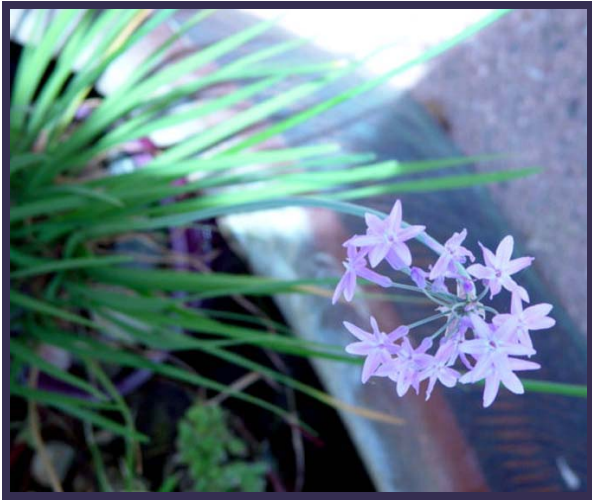


Take advantage of our club's invitation to experience a private tour of a fantastic Sedona water garden featured in November 2006 Phoenix Home & Garden. The colorful outdoor living space showcases two large ponds –one for water lilies and lotus, another for goldfish and koi. There's also a bog to filter and clean the water, as well as a waterfall and stream. Of course, all of this is set against the backdrop of Sedona's unforgettable red-rock formations. Our hosts have built everything themselves and will be happy to share their wealth of pond information and lessons learned.

This is a day trip scheduled for Sunday, September 2nd, with the caravan from Tucson starting out between 7:00 AM-8:00 AM. Casey Case (member) is organizing this event. Car-pooling is expected, with gas expenses shared among participants. Lunch will be Dutch treat. Casey needs to know the "head count" by our August 23rd general meeting. Email her your questions or reservations ASAP so that she can start working on the carpools and let the pond owners know the approximate number of club members expected for this tour.

Aquatic Plant Profile

Featuring Plants That Love Our Desert Water Gardens



Society Ornamental Garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*)
(Photo courtesy of Wayne Tomczyk's (member) garden.)

If you want an unusual bog plant for your container garden, Society Ornamental Garlic may be your inspiration. This plant is normally thought of as an easy, drought tolerant, spreading terrestrial plant. The fact that this perennial thrives in a bog garden environment in our desert may be a surprise!

With its evergreen, chive-like leaves, it has foliage that can grow to a foot tall. Society Garlic likes full sun to light shade, and has excellent heat tolerance, bearing clusters of purple flowers. The name, Society Garlic, comes from the fact that, supposedly, although its taste is close to real garlic, it was thought not to give bad breath in "proper society." However, don't eat it, as it's not really a garlic at all, but more closely related to the narcissus flower. Society Garlic is native to South Africa.

Filtering Through The Facts

Let's start out by saying that filters are not absolutely necessary to have a clean pond. However, effective filters greatly assist in removing both solid and dissolved matter from pond water. There are four filter types:

- ◆ **Biological Filtration** – beneficial bacteria breaking down toxins related to the "nitrogen" cycle.
- ◆ **Mechanical Filtration** – removal of particles and debris from pond water.
- ◆ **Chemical Filtration** – removal of undesirable chemical substances like pesticides through activated carbon or absorptive resins.
- ◆ **Ultraviolet (UV) Sterilizers** – radiation killing floating microorganisms.

This month's panel will primarily address *biological filtration* which is the most common means of removing dissolved matter from pond water. If your pond has a heavy fish load or you have trouble keeping the water clear, a biofilter is definitely recommended. Growing plants are also another great form of natural biological filtration.

Biofilters can range from the do-it-yourself type to high-tech, more expensive configurations. The essential components for biofilters are a container and filter media, such as gravel, lava rock, hair curlers, bioballs, styrofoam packing peanuts –to name but a few media that allows for bacteria colonization. The more surface area your filter media has the better it will work. The media does not clean the water, but rather provides a place for the bacteria to grow.

Biological filters use beneficial bacteria and natural enzymes to digest and recycle organic matter caused by fish waste, uneaten fish food, and other naturally decaying organic matter. The bacteria living in the biofilter needs constant fresh moving water, oxygen and food to survive. If you turn your pump off, at least 80% of your bacteria will die overnight from lack of oxygen.



"The water gardener is a true ecogardener, for no other form of gardening incorporates as many ecological principles."

- Department of Horticulture
Cornell University



PROFILING MEMBERS PROJECTS

Betty Blackstock and **Klara Cserny** (members) hold the secrets to watergardening in small spaces. Betty, and her husband, Chuck, relocated to a Tucson RV resort ten years ago, and live here year round. Their neighbor and good friend, Klara, relocated from Camarillo, CA, to the same RV resort about the same time. They met in an investment class that Betty's husband was teaching.

Betty, a Master Gardener in Seattle, got interested in "ponding" when she created a birding and wildlife habitat behind their mobile home. She has learned much in her five years of watergardening. Both she and Klara have embraced the concept of modularity, with the ability to use a series of stock tanks, such as Rubbermaid™ or



Tuffstuff™, to create interesting pond and biofilter configurations –all installed above the ground.

Both the Blackstock's and Klara's water gardens have 20-gallon biofilters, supported by either a 250-GPH or 330-GPH pump. Their stock tanks range from 35-gallon to 110-gallon tanks for the main ponds. These economical configurations can be readily changed, and, in fact, Betty's was redone this past May, and Klara is upgrading and changing out her main

pond now. Reed fencing material skirts the complete tank configuration as a finishing touch.



Their inspiration is drawn from TTW meetings, books, and the



internet. While doing some web research, Klara discovered a creative approach to making a great biofilter that you never have to clean. Both ladies will be part of the TTW August biofilter panel, demonstrating how to put together their biofilter. Judging from the healthy appearance of their plants and clarity of water, it's working really well!

Betty discovered the Tucson Watergardeners through an announcement in the newspaper, and convinced Klara to come, too. Both have been TTW members for about seven years. They support each other in their design and "construction" endeavors, with a lot of "grunt" help from Betty's husband!

Their modular water gardens have a variety of plants, such as cannas, water lettuce, parrot's feather, cattails, and even hardy water lilies. There's also goldfish, as well as mosquito fish. Most of their plant collections were give-aways from the TTW meetings.



These friends have gotten hooked on water gardening. As Klara says, "Watergardening is the best stress reducer in the world."

Betty wholeheartedly agrees!

This and That....



Greetings From The President!

Because there's so much going on in the next couple of months, I wanted to make the calendar of events and upcoming programs my item of emphasis. I feel that the finale to our '07 season offers something for all our members' interests. *Hope to see everyone out and about!* Also, we extend our gratitude to Mary McMacken, for our July program, when the scheduled speaker failed to show.

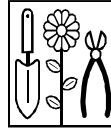
TTW September Calendar:

Sunday 2nd	Sedona Day Trip Contact: Casey Case <i>now!</i> She needs to know the number going. casey@dakotacom.net
Sunday 9th	2007 Public Water Garden Tour 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Thursday 20th	TTW Board Meeting 7:30 PM Host: R. Minami
Thursday 27th	TTW General Meeting 7:30 PM Program: "Koi Keeping-Rules of Thumb" by Eddie Hoggan, Guest Speaker, Desert Pet Center ...understanding a favorite pond creature

TTW October Calendar:

Saturday 6th	Members' Fall Pot Luck 6:00 PM Hosts: C. Case & S. Steffe RSVP for a head count and what side dishes you will be bringing. Casey and her husband are cooking pork ribs! casey@dakotacom.net
Thursday 25th	TTW General Meeting 7:30 PM Program: Celebrating end of our water gardening season!

Elizabeth Good

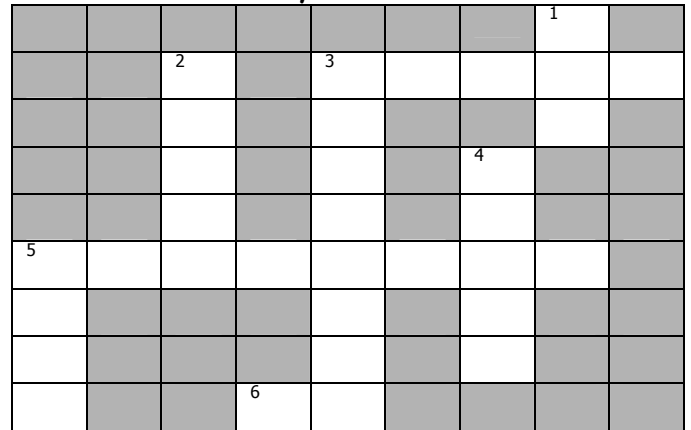


Watergardening Classifieds

Free Koi & Gold Fish to New Homes! Call Debby (663-5290) or Maureen (760-7220).

Hint. Remove any brown or spent foliage from your water plants before it has had a chance to fall into the water and decay.

Summer Days Crossword ¹



Down

1. Type of water garden
2. Can tear
3. Arizona no-no
4. Type of flower stem
5. Another word for pond pudding

Across

3. Pond pest
5. Lives on the edge
6. Acidity or alkalinity

FOR INFO TO GO

Good & Bad Water Plants For Arizona

www.tucsonwatergardeners.org

TTW Contacts

President:

Vice Pres:

Treasurer

Secretary:

Membership:

Webmaster:

Editor:

Circulation:

¹ Solution: Down. 1. Bog. 2. Liner. 3. Hyacinth. 4. Scape. 5. Muck. Across. 3. Heron. 5. Marginal. 6. pH.