

Ponderings

Upcoming Public Watergarden Tour

Official
Newsletter of
The Tucson
Watergardeners



Please volunteer to help out at one of our tour gardens. It's only a couple of hours of time that we need. But, we need a little slice of time from a lot of folks! Sign up sheets will be made available at our August general meeting. If you can't attend that meeting, please give Elizabeth Good a call and volunteer! *It's important!*

Volume X, Issue 7

August 2008

NOTEWORTHY:

- Next month is our public **2008 Water Garden Tour!** This annual event to showcase our desert water gardens is now scheduled for **Sunday, September 14th.**

Many thanks to the owners and designers of the six pond settings we now have commitments for opening to our public tour! We are excited about the variety of water gardens to be presented. Some of the features to be found on this year's tour include natural desert rock work water gardens; large culverts providing fantastic fish hiding places; a small in-town water garden; water gardens as integral to Feng Shui principles; and, the surprise of water lily ponds in the midst of a natural desert setting. See you on the 28th at our general meeting. Please volunteer to help!

Elizabeth Good, President



Ponders Calendar

General Meeting

Thursday, **Aug 28th**, 7:30 PM @ Junior League of Tucson 2099 E River Road

Program: "Living With Urban Wildlife" by Bill Kaufman (*Read more on page 2*)

Door Prizes: Share your extra plants & stuff!

Board Notes

Mark your calendar for the next TTW Board meeting on August 21st. Hostess is Renee Shane-Boyd.

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Pond Mucking!

When a pond is built, it immediately begins to age. For every pond owner, that means maintenance. It's just a fact of pond ownership! An important part of maintenance is keeping as much debris as possible from settling into the bottom of your pond. Organic plant and animal debris will decompose, forming deadly ammonia and nitrates that are toxic to aquatic animal life. A lot of debris is created as our aquatic plants go through their growth and bloom cycles in the summer. Tree leaf debris in a pond is particularly challenging.

If an inch or more of muck has accumulated, one of the handiest tools to accomplish getting loose debris out of the pond is the pond vacuum. If you have ever used a shop vac or a wet/dry vacuum on your carpets, the pond vacuum operation is very similar. A motor creates suction in the vacuum

which draws water from the bottom or sides of the pond, this is then passed through a chamber, with the water released back into the pond, but the debris held in a muslin type bag. The better pond vacuums have an automatic shut off switch, that will turn off the vacuum when the tank is full, and then drain itself before restarting.

Depending on features, pond vacuums can range in price from around \$50 to \$500, or higher. Features can include such things as two canisters, a variety of nozzles, a telescopic handle, and being fully submersible. The cheapest units attach to a garden hose, but are not powerful enough to cope with large or deep ponds. Most of the quality vacuums come with at least a two year warranty.

As a word of caution, when you vacuum out your pond you inadvertently will catch larvae and other small pond critters.

And what to do with the collected debris? It makes an excellent garden mulch and yet becomes another good reason for investing in a pond vacuum!

Our August Program: Living With Urban Wildlife

What would you do if you found a rattlesnake on your back patio? What about a bobcat that frequents your water garden?

Bill Kaufman, our August guest speaker, will address a wide range of desert wildlife that water gardeners are likely to encounter. Four organizations have come together to develop this program, namely Arizona Game and Fish; Tucson Botanical Gardens; Tucson Audubon Society; and, Pima County Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

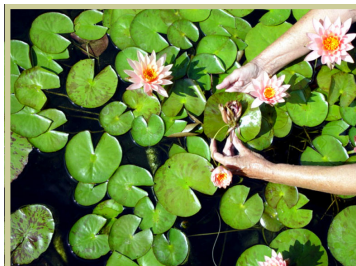
In addition to being a docent at Tohono Chul Park, Kaufman, the immediate past President of the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists, frequently leads nature walks for the public at Sabino Canyon.

If you are looking for summer discoveries, Casey Case's 5,500 gallon water garden is the place to be. This avid water gardener, and her husband, Smokie, turned their swimming pool into a maximized water garden that has since allowed loads of water gardening experimentation!

Her water lily collection includes at least twelve large specimen plants, with six being tropical day bloomers; two tropical night bloomers; and four hardy water lilies.

While the February '08 Ponderings followed development of plantlets from her pink viviparous tropical water lily, this summer has produced the very unusual for Casey — the first sign of a viviparous *hardy* water lily! What she thought was a Colorado, she's now thinking is a Georgia Peach.

Casey's Corner!



Casey discovers the hardy water lily plantlet from a spent lily bloom! Ties to the parent are severed. Now the very tiny plantlet is on its own!



What's Casey up to with the flagstone in the picture above? She's fabricated a pie-shaped cover for her tropical lilies that keeps the koi from rooting and scattering the kitty litter; and, lifting a piece of her "pie", makes inserting fertilizer sticks a snap! She started with a cardboard template, and did her own grinding with a diamond bit. This cover only works for tropical lilies that grow from the center; whereas, hardy lilies grow across the pot.



NOZZLE NOTES

Fountain head nozzles go by several names, including fountain sprays, or spray heads. Regardless of their name, nozzles with spray patterns are used both for visual excitement and to add oxygen to pond water. What you have to be careful of is sizing a nozzle for the pond with our rapid water evaporation rate in the desert, and, not placing a nozzle among aquatic plants, such as water lilies, that don't like water motion.

Basically, a nozzle directs the flow of water from an attached pump into various spray patterns. Some of the more common spray patterns are referred to by names such as bell, tulip, trumpet, frothy, fleur-de-lis, pirouette, and blossom—to name a few of the myriad of patterns available. Nozzles range from basic, inexpensive plastic fountain heads, to customized spray nozzles, with lighting and music synchronization for large commercial installations. Many nozzle kits come with a diverter valve for a second spray nozzle—and two or three nozzles that are interchangeable with your pond's moods!

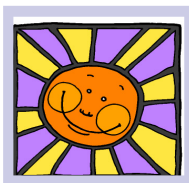
A rule of thumb is to have at least as much distance to the edge of the pond as the nozzle spray height you desire, in order to minimize water loss.

Some of the more familiar commercial names for nozzles include Little Giant, Oase Manufacturing, Pondmaster, CalPump, and TetraPond. So, this August, live a little and add a nozzle—or change your tired, worn out one!

2008 Future Programs

SEPTEMBER: “Alternative Methods of Filtering” by Bill Hudson, Member

OCTOBER: Celebrating End of Our Watergardening Club Season!



Watergardening Classifieds

Urgently Need To Disestablish Pond. Please help me out in relocating plants and fish to new homes as quickly as possible. There are water lilies, iris, other floating plants, as well as goldfish and Gambusia. Call Skip (Marie) at 747-1267, or email biskkon@aol.com.

Native Pond Field Trip. If you are interested in participating and/or helping to organize a field trip and possible picnic to a local native pond in the early fall, please contact Ed Campbell at 760-2393 or plantman7@juno.com.

Sell or Trade Water Garden Items. Ad space is *free* to members! Write-ups on your water garden items must be in to the editor by the 4th of each month.

Thought for the Month:

As with most arts, gardening is
an expression of our hands.

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To promote responsible ideals of water gardening among our members...



Aquatic Plant Profile



Papyrus Sedge (*Cyperus papyrus*)

Photo courtesy R. Minami water garden.

If you are looking for a tall aquatic ornamental plant for your medium to large water feature, the papyrus may be your answer. This plant can grow 5' or higher, and its long stems are topped with a dense cluster of thin, bright green, thread-like

blooms resembling a feather duster. These blooms are spectacular when illuminated from below —looks like fireworks exploding!

The papyrus is an excellent water filtering plant. As a member of the extensive Cyperaceae family, the papyrus has a rich history, and is the plant of paper-making fame in ancient Egypt. Originating in its native habitat of the Nile Delta, today's papyrus should be treated as a bog plant in our desert water gardening environment. It thrives in full to part sun. The papyrus can be propagated by dividing its rhizomes, and should be grown in large (such as 15 gallon) containers placed 1" to 3" underwater to keep it from invading a pond.

This perennial is also known as the Egyptian paper reed, paper rush, or bulrush. It has dwarf relatives that are identical in appearance, but only growing to heights of 3' —excellent for the smaller water gardens or container water gardening.