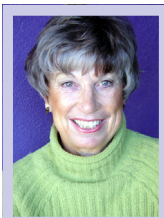


# Ponderings

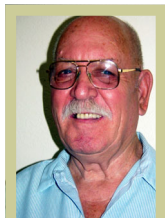
## Perspectives On Our '08 Season!



**Elizabeth Good**  
**TTW President**

"I want to give back to the club a little of what I have received in benefits over the past years," explains Elizabeth, as she ventures into her second year as club President. She made a move from Puerto Rico to Tucson in 1978, and has been a member of TTW for seven years, having two of her homes featured on TTW tours, as well as the Tucson Botanical Gardens Tour. Growing up in Holland, water surrounded her, so getting settled into our desert environment gave importance to creating an oasis in the desert with water features. A personal '08 goal is to finish the mosaic work around her pond in her signature purples, blues and greens!

Her goals are to increase awareness about the existence of the club, as she feels the "value add" far exceeds the annual dues. Elizabeth also wants to increase exposure for the club's annual water garden tour, and wants to start early in identifying this year's tour gardens. An increase in tour revenue is needed to replenish the club's grant funds.



**Ken Canada**  
**TTW Vice President**

"I would like to see the club membership grow and have more publicity for our plant sales and tours," are key objectives offered by TTW's newly elected Vice

President. "We also need to attract more speakers for our meetings."

Ken, and his wife Jane, have lived in Tucson for seven years, relocating from Fremont, CA. Both have been TTW members for about four years. Gardening is an important part of their retirement lifestyle. They have even designed and built their own greenhouse and established a water harvesting system. Their horticultural experiences range from propagating orchids and desert plants, to raising tomatoes.

By going on a water garden tour, Ken and Jane became interested in adding a water garden into their landscape. "We have several tubs of plants ready to go in the pond," Ken offers. His 2008 personal goal is to complete their water garden *this year!*

**Official  
Newsletter of  
The Tucson  
Watergardeners**

**Volume X, Issue 1**

**February 2008**

### NOTEWORTHY:

- *Welcome back to our 10th water gardening season as a club!*
- *Annual dues payable at our first general meeting.*

### Dues:

*\$ 15.00 Single;*

*\$ 20.00 Household*

- *New season, new format for Ponderings! Let us know what you think.*



## Ponders Calendar

### General Meeting

Thursday, Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM @ Junior League of Tucson 2099 E River Road

**Program: Spring Start-Up: Myths, Reality & ???** by Carl Ragel (Member and owner of Carl Ragel's Natural Pools & Gardens)

Refreshments: R. Minami & C. Case

Door Prizes: Share your extra plants & stuff!

### Board Notes

Meeting Feb 21<sup>st</sup>  
7:30 PM Hostess:  
Elizabeth Good

### Inside this issue:

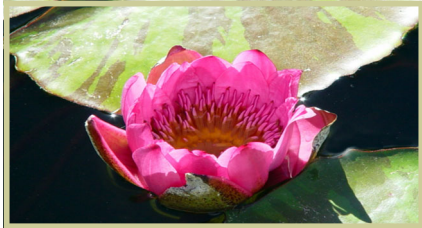
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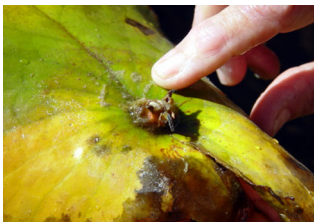
*Getting Your Water Garden In Shape* 4

## Propagating the Queen of Siam

While our club has been resting this past winter, Casey Case (member) has been busy propagating a viviparous pink tropical water lily called the Queen of Siam. This jewel

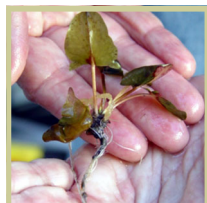


of the water garden is known for its long season and excellent blooms. She brought the original lily from Florida a couple of years ago. However,



the real excitement came late in the '07 season, with Casey's discovery of plantlets (viviparous nodes) appearing on the mature leaves! It was time to learn about propagation of tropical water lilies!

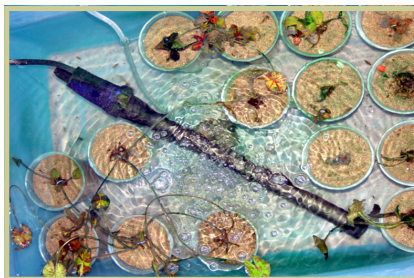
A plastic water-filled half barrel became the initial nursery. Grow lights, with 120-watt bulbs suspended above the barrel, provided eighteen hours of light per day, sustaining the water temperature at a warm 90°. Each node was carefully planted in kitty litter with a half fertilizer spike. Given this nurturing environment, the roots on each plantlet rapidly emerged.



*Tropical water lilies tend to be a bit more fragile than their "Hardy" counterparts. They have a wider range of colors, including purple and blue; and, their flower stems grow above the water several inches. Many are viviparous, meaning that the plantlet germinates while still attached to the parent plant. Several varieties of tropical lilies bloom at night.*

However, Casey's lily tank experiment began to challenge her. The mixture of warm water, with the plantlets in kitty litter and fertilizer was the right environment for rapid algae bloom. To make matters worse, the plantlets were losing their original set of roots. After going a couple of rounds with cleaning the whole tank out and starting over with fresh water, her diligence in web research offered Casey a very different approach.

Thanks to Sean Stevens' article, "Growing Waterlilies in Dixie Cups," Casey revamped her waterlily experiment. She repotted the Queen of Siam plantlets in 7 ounce



clear plastic Dixie cups, along with night blooming tropical lilies, Red Flare and Texas Shell, using pure play sand and a tiny touch of phosphate droplets buried in the sand of each Dixie cup.



At this point, because the plantlets had no roots, her inventiveness led to office paperclips as a means to anchor the tiny plants in the sand, yet keep their crowns above the sand. Not only is the algae under control as part of this process, but small roots began to form. Also, use of grow lights was reduced to twelve hours per day. The experimental lily tanks are housed on a covered, but open porch with a northern exposure.

Casey's method of labeling each Dixie cup is also a great idea to be borrowed. She has taken foam rubber obtained at any craft store, cut the colored foam rubber into slender strips, and poked each strip in the sand of every Dixie cup. This has allowed her to color code her water lily plantlet collection, for example, Queen of Siam as pink.

At this time Casey has about fourteen to fifteen Queen of Siam plantlets that are growing healthy root and leaf systems, in addition to her other waterlily experiments. Rightfully, Casey refers to this collection of new plantlets as her "babies" and is very optimistic that some of her waterlilies will be available for the TTW May plant sale!

Thank you, Casey, for sharing your experiment with our membership and for sharing the lessons you have learned!

## Pazzaz! Garden Floats & Gazing Globes

Glass floats and gazing globes are making their comeback to our water gardens. The ornamental glass pond balls are completely sealed, and come in a wide variety of colors. If there's a loop, keep the glass ball in place by fish line and a weight. Prices generally range from \$15.00 to \$25.00 per ball and can be purchased from a variety of sources. Supposedly the float's shiny surface wards off predators from your pond.



*Glass floats can add interest and the energy of color amid your aquatic plantscape. These ornamental spheres come from the tradition of the Japanese glass floats.*

The old-fashioned gazing globes can also add interest and color tucked along side your water garden.

Dating from 13th century Venice, the gazing globe has several legends about bringing prosperity to its owner and warding off evil spirits who did not wish to see their own reflections.



Reflections in a gazing globe.

The reflective quality of the gazing globe allows it to be placed strategically in a garden to indirectly view movement. Unlike the glass float, the gazing globes have a neck for anchoring to a stand, usually made of metal.



### Watergardening Classifieds

**Remember the May Plant Sale!** When you begin dividing and conquering your water plants this spring, set aside those "extras" for the club's plant sale. Having them potted for the sale is always a big hit!

**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.

**Sales Position Available.** Carl Ragel's Natural Pools & Gardens ([www.naturalpoolsandgardens.com](http://www.naturalpoolsandgardens.com)) is seeking an energetic, self-starting part-time person who knows the basics about watergardening, biological filtration and how ponds go together. Send resume via fax to 323-6522 or drop by 2143 N. Country Club.

Thought for the Month: A garden is made up of stories, not things.



### 2008 Future Programs

**MARCH:** Water Harvesting  
**APRIL:** All About Bees

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*To promote responsible ideals of watergardening among our members.*



## Getting Your Watergarden In Shape: It's Spring!

As we begin our season, here are some friendly maintenance reminders. Remember that investing in spring chores has its payoff in a healthy pond going into our hot desert summer weather.

**Visually Check Your Pond.** Take a look to see if the pond is holding its water level. Inspect the condition of the liner. Clean up dead plants and fallen leaves around the pond.

**Check Pump & Filter System.** Look for any cracks in the pump housing. If the filter media looks worn and dirty, replace it with new media. Test your water quality.

**Pond Muck.** There's several

theories about what to do with the sludge that is resident at the bottom of your pond—from draining and cleaning the entire pond to skimming and leaving a silt layer. Remember that leaving some muck insures "good" bacteria. Too much muck is a bad thing!

**Plants.** Remove dead leaves and spent foliage. Move plants that have been hibernating in the deeper parts of your pond closer to the water surface for spring sun. Begin fertilizing when pond temperatures reach 55°-60°F. Assess your plant inventory. Strive for a mix of deep water plants, marginals, submerged oxygenators, and surface float-

ers which will cover 60-70% of your pond surface to help prevent algae bloom.

**Fish.** Fluctuations in seasons are hard on fish. Check for disease or injury. Begin feeding fish when the water temperature is consistently above 55°F. Commercial protein food—or Cheerios as a low protein food, is easier for the fish to digest as they come out of semi-hibernation.

*Editors Note:* Past issues of *Ponderings* have carried a number of articles regarding spring start-up. Consult the *Ponderings* index at:

<http://tucsonwatergardeners.org/>