

# Ponderings



## Season's Close...

As we end our tenth year as Tucson's water gardening club, there's much to reflect on.

- Our desert makes a fabulous water gardening environment, and our ponds support an enviable array of aquatic and water loving plants.
- Our annual public events bring new members with shared interests.
- This year's May plant sale achieved one of our best net profits in the club's history.
- On behalf of the club, we have been able to collaborate on articles for two national magazines.

I would personally like to thank my fellow Officers, Board of Directors and Committee Chairs for the hours and leadership you have given to our activities. To our members goes my deepest appreciation for the hours you all have donated to promoting "H2O" gardening in Tucson!

*Elizabeth Good, Outgoing President*



## Ponders Calendar

### General Meeting

Thursday, **Oct 23rd**, 7:30 PM @ Junior League of Tucson 2099 E River Road

**Program:** "Celebrating End of Our Watergardening Club Season" Program, Voting, & "Brainstorming '09 Ideas" Small Group Discussion. Refreshments to be provided by Dennis and Mary McMacken. Thanks to our "Chef Extraordinaire" and his Assistant for taking this on a *second* year!

**Special Door Prizes**, in addition to sharing your extra plants & stuff!

### Board Notes

The joint 08/09 TTW Board meeting will be at 7:30 PM on Thursday, November 20th. Hostess is Elizabeth Good.

- *This is the final '08 issue of Ponderings!*

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Watergardeners

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### NOTEWORTHY:

- Save \$5.00 and bring your '09 membership renewal to our October general meeting. If you can't make the meeting, mail it in. The Board voted to provide an incentive cost structure to encourage completing membership renewals prior to our February 2009 meeting which kicks off the 2009 water gardening season. Thanks to all who completed their renewals early!

## Nomination & Election: 2009 Officer & Director Slate

At our October General Meeting we elect our 2009 Officers and *three* new Directors for 2009-2010. Nominations may also be made from the floor, providing the nominee has agreed to run prior to being nominated.

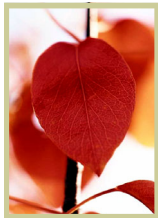
### OFFICERS 2009

<b>President</b>	<b>Paul Roberts</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Ken Canada</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Bill Hudson</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Wayne Tomczyk</b>

*Note: The immediate past president automatically serves as a TTW corporate officer and is not elected.*

### DIRECTORS 2009-2010

**Betty Blackstock**  
**Klara Cserny**  
**Mary McMacken**



### Fall Maintenance

We've survived our desert summer heat, and are now enjoying more moderate fall temperatures. However, autumn ushers in some important pond maintenance chores.

- ✓ Get decaying leaves and debris out of the pond. Their decomposition can throw off the ecological balance and lead to spring algae problems. It's better to clean it up now. This is a good time for adding coldwater beneficial bacteria. Be vigilant about cleaning up your skimmer baskets as an important front on fighting debris.

- ✓ Foliage on perennial aquatic plants that is brown and dying should be removed. Your plants are going dormant, so spruce them up now! Stop fertilizing plants when the water temperature drops below 70° F.

- ✓ Prune yellow water lily pads within several inches of the crown. However, don't prune the new foliage, which consists of very short, small leaves produced near the lily crown. You may want to drop your tropical lilies to a deeper

part of the pond, or remove them completely from the pond and place them in a more protected and warmer area, such as a hothouse, garage, or covered patio. There's always the option of electrically heated, submersible pots for your prized tropicals.

- ✓ Give your fish just a little extra food so they can store energy for hibernation. When water temperatures drop below 60°, feed a wheat-based (higher carbohydrates/less protein) fish food product only two to three times a week. When the water temperature drops below 50°, stop feeding until spring. A thermometer for your pond is highly recommended. If you have significantly pruned back your aquatic plant cover, you may need to provide fish some temporary places to hide from predators, such as a drainage pipe.

- ✓ If you have a shallow pond and are in a freeze area of the Tucson Valley, be sure there is an opening in the ice to keep a fresh oxygen supply for your fish or other pond creatures. Solid ice traps toxic gases and can kill.



"Autumn is a season followed immediately by looking forward to Spring."

*Anonymous*



### Watergardening Classifieds

**Red Eared Slider Turtles Need Adopted Homes.** Need to find homes for a growing turtle brood and prefer pond over aquarium environments. Turtles are located in the Broadmoore Neighborhood, SE of Broadway. There are five turtles at about 1 year (3"), and a couple of new clutches coming up. An adult male is also available. Contact John at [jswiss@earthlink.net](mailto:jswiss@earthlink.net).

**Associate Editor Wanted.** If you like to write, research, and visit other club members' ponds, this is a real opportunity for you. We would like to venture into our '09 water gardening season with an Associate Editor for *Ponderings*. Apply to the Editor.

**Visit our web site:** <http://tucsonwatergardeners.org/>

This site contains both an *index* and *compendium* of water gardening related articles from *Ponderings*, 2004-2007.

## Tropical Lily Nursery!

Casey Case (member) is already planning for the club's May 2009 Plant Sale at Reid Park! Our resident "scientist" is providing a variety of homes to nurture the small tropical lily plantlets that have germinated from parent plants leaves (viviparous) of tropical lilies found in hers, as well as other members' ponds. When she pots the small plantlets, she uses plastic cups of various colors for "coding" the emerging lily collection. From now until May, Casey will be experimenting with a variety of set-ups, including use of submersible, electrically heated Thermoplanters which provide warmth, during the coldest part of our year, around a mature tropical lily's root system. A Queen of Siam, free to the club, is also on the way from a vendor with whom Casey has previously done business.

When we are enjoying those exotic tropical lily blooms—especially the wonderful blue-violet colors, in our ponds next year, let's remember to thank Casey for the generosity of her time and materials—and for being the steward of this most interesting winter desert water gardening project!



Setting up the lily nursery.



36 Panama Pacific "vips"—courtesy Ed Campbell's pond



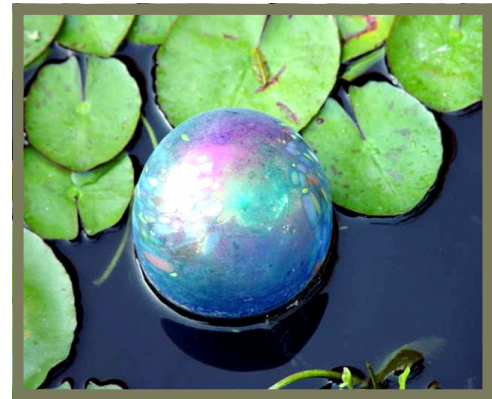
Yes! A Thermoplanters for wintering lilies on those cold desert nights.



Tina and Lindsey Woods "vips" take the heat—courtesy Casey Case.



127-gallon kiddie pool about to turn tropical water lily nursery!



**Watergardeners October 5th Annual Potluck.** It was one of those wonderfully mild autumn desert evenings for club members to enjoy Elizabeth Good's central Tucson water garden. Around 30 members attended the Sunday evening event. (Left to right: Cheri Schnepf, Jane Canada, Joe Schodtler, Jeff Schnepf, and Elizabeth Good (kneeling center) pulling out filter.)

*See you next February!*



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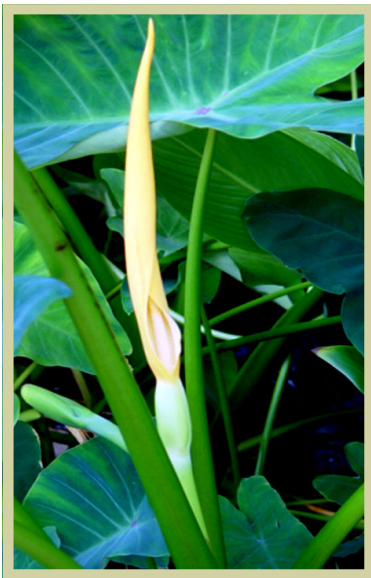
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*To develop and promote friendships and camaraderie among our members...  
See you in '09!*



## Aquatic Plant Profile



**Bloom of a Local Elephant Ear**  
(*Colocasia esculenta*)



Volumes can be written about the Taro or Elephant Ear from the family Araceae. These very large, showy plants are easily adapted to our desert pond and bog environments, as well as serving as natural pond filters. These perennials are best planted at the edges of a pond or in a container, as the large rhizomes easily spread. In our environment, filtered sun is preferable for sustaining them. There are many varieties to choose from, ranging from the more common green taro, to exotic variegated and black varieties. The corms are valued in many cultures as a staple food source. However, in its raw form, the taro plant has calcium oxalate which can be toxic and cause severe burning-itching of the skin. Handle with care! The Elephant Ear produces small flowers massed on a spadix, surrounded by a large hooded spathe, as seen here in the far left picture.

Think about adding “architectural” interest of the Elephant Ear to your spring pond!