

# Ponderings

## Water Garden Tour 2009—Almost Here!

Volunteers will be essential to the success of our upcoming two-day September public tour. This year we're doing things a bit differently. Some of the garden owners have asked for volunteers; others are using friends or have already found club members to help. A "club" desk — "Tour Central," located on East Ft. Lowell Road, will also need to be staffed both days by club members. Tour goers will be able to purchase tickets and get detailed driving directions, our printed "Guide To Watergardening In Southern Arizona", fertilizer spikes and other water gardening accessories, plants (if available), and get water gardening questions answered. A volunteer roster will be circulated at our upcoming August meeting with specific garden and desk locations and time slots identified. Thank you to those who have already signed on!

Paul Roberts



## Ponders Calendar

### General Meeting

Thursday, **August 27th**, 7:30 PM @  
Junior League of Tucson 2099 E River  
Road

### Program: Water Plant Dividing

This is your "hands on" workshop on dividing those overcrowded, root bound water plants! Wear old clothes and dig in! This is your chance to rip, stomp, and tear! Tools, planters, and planting media will be provided. Fertilizer spikes will also be available for sale. Bring your overgrown plants, come, and have fun! And, take home a "refreshed" plant... or two...or three!

**Refreshments:** Regina Nassen

### Board Meetings Date/Location

Sunday, **August 16th**, E. Good Residence, 1:30 PM

Sunday, **September 13th**, McMacken Residence, 1:30 PM

Sunday, **November 8th**, Roberts Residence, 1:30 PM.  
*This is a joint Board meeting of the outgoing '09 and incoming '10 Boards.*

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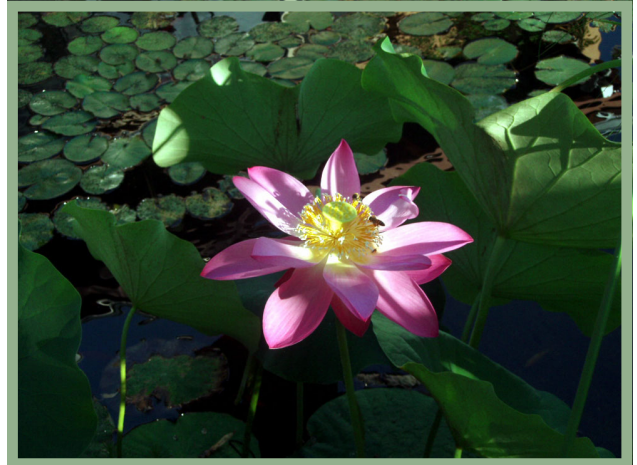
### NOTEWORTHY:

September 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> are the dates for our public Water Garden Tour. The tour will run 9:00 AM—3:00 PM each day. Some gardens will be Saturday only; others, open Sunday only. *All paid and honorary club members will be receiving a complimentary tour ticket by mail.*

### Inside this issue:

<i>A Desert First Lady</i>	2
<i>Spur Cross Ranch</i>	3
<i>Water Celery</i>	4

## A Desert First Lady Pink Lotus!



*Hardy lotus growing in the Roberts and Shrader summer water garden in northeast Tucson.*

There's a "First Lady" among us, and she's a fragrant, semi-dwarf hardy lotus (*Nelumbo*) thriving in the pond of Paul Roberts and Tony Shrader. The lotus bare root was purchased from Crystal Creek Pond Supply LLC, <http://www.justpondplants.com/lotus.htm>. During our desert winter, this newly acquired Lotus root was kept indoors in a small pot, floating in water.

When the water temperature reached 70° in the outdoor pond, the lotus was then potted. The bare root was planted in an eight gallon pot. The medium used (from bottom to top) was as follows: 2" of gravel; 6" of fine dirt; 4" of sand; and, 4" of fine dirt. The top of the pot was placed 6-8" below the top of the water surface. This particular "First Lady" Lotus is in partial sun, meaning it receives full sun for four hours in the afternoon. Lotuses are very heavy feeders. Roberts has fertilized at a rate of 5 times what would have been done for a water lily. Time release fertilizer spikes obtained through the club were used. Now, in mid-summer, the "First Lady" Lotus has put out a 6' long runner and is starting to put up leaves from that runner. A second bloom is also starting to form.

The Lotus flower has been appreciated by poets, scholars and artists as well as ordinary citizens for thousands of years. Lotus rhizomes and seeds are used as food and in traditional Asian herbal medicine.

Although it looks tropical, the lotus plant is considered a hardy, aquatic perennial, native to southern Asia and Australia. Lotuses are found in white and pink colors, in general, and they grow in shallow and murky waters. Lotus flowers enjoy warm sunlight and are intolerant to cold weather. Lotus have three kinds of leaves, the first is the small coin leaf that floats on the water's surface. Then, when larger, it is called a floating leaf, and, when it extends above the water on its stalk, it is called a standing leaf. The semi-dwarf lotus has 12-14" leaves that grow 2-3' tall. The larger varieties have leaves capable of reaching *two feet* in circumference and colossal flowers up to *1 foot* in diameter! The smaller varieties can have leaves and flowers as small as 2-3", but still require a spacious container to be able to spread out and attain optimum development.

Care has to be taken to keep the Lotus roots from freezing in our desert winters. Late in the fall the yellowed foliage should be cut off and the plant lowered to the deepest part of the pond; or, the tubers can be lifted out and stored in a cool, frost-free location.

## Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area



Kevin Smith  
Interpretive Ranger

As part of its community service outreach, the Tucson Watergardeners recently provided the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area with over twenty native yellow water lilies (*Nymphaea mexicana*), also known as the Mexican Waterlily or the Banana Waterlily.

Spur Cross is the newest addition to Maricopa County's Regional Parks System. This conservation area encompasses 2,154 acres of diverse, rugged upper Sonoran Desert. The north Valley location contains fascinating archeology sites and lush riparian areas along Cave Creek, which flows throughout the winter months. Remnants of early mining and ranching, from which the park gets its name, are still apparent in the park.

The conservation area also contains a 30'x20' pond that is 3'-4' in depth. This pond was completed a couple of years ago with a primary focus of providing a breeding place for native and endangered fish.

It has been stocked with over 450 Gila Topminnows, and also has the goal of introducing Longfin Dace. These newly acquired yellow water lilies will provide native fish species shelter and breeding environments. Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area Interpretive Ranger, Kevin Smith, picked up the plants in Tucson and wanted to convey his appreciation to the club for its efforts. A particular thank you goes out to club members Pam Glenn and Maria Figueroa, who braved the heat of our monsoon weather and insect attacks to make this plant donation possible for one of Arizona's protected species!



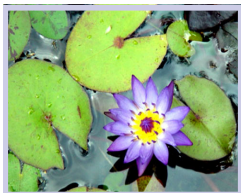
Smith placing and planting the water lilies.



## Watergardening Classifieds

### Return of the Tropical Water Lilies

#### in a Dixie Cup!



We will, again, be offering wonderful starter tropical water lilies. Priced at \$10.00 a plant (a real bargain

by retail or internet prices!), these tropical beauties will be available for the last time at our August General Meeting. First come—first pick! *Thank you for last month's generous support of this club project!*

**Thank you** to Jane Canada (member) for working with the Director Sangetsu North America, here in Tucson, to make water lily blossoms and pads available for class work in the art of Japanese flower arranging.

### Check Out Our Web Site:

<http://tucsonwatergardeners.org/>

Volunteers do not necessarily have the  
time; they just have the heart.

- E. Andrew

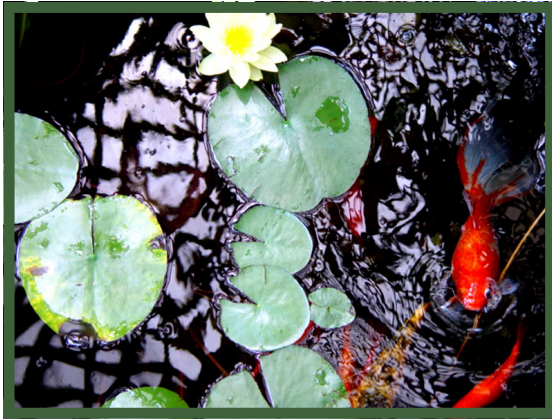
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*To promote responsible ideals of water gardening among our members.*

## Aquatic Plant Profile



**Water Celery**  
*Oenanthe javanica*  
Family: Apiaceae

If you are looking for interesting foliage and an excellent vegetative filter to absorb those excess pond nutrients, then Water Celery should be a consideration. In fact, this plant is grown for its foliage. Water Celery also goes by the names of Water Dropwort and Water Parsley.

This is a perennial that loves to have its feet wet or be placed in bog-like conditions. The mature plant can grow to 1' in height, with a 2-3' spread. It bears tiny white flowers. In our desert environment, Water Celery seems to prefer shaded environments. There are several species of Water Celery, including variegated water celery with pink edges ("Flamingo"). The Water Celery also has some notorious cousins, with roots resembling parsnips, that are highly poisonous to both animals and humans.

Water Celery is a culinary herb that is used in Japanese, Korean, and Southeast Asian cuisine.