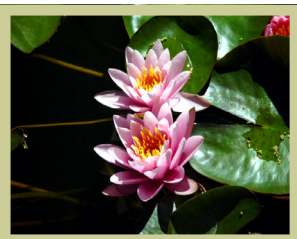


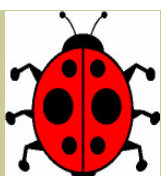
Ponderings



Water Garden Tour '09 Shaping Up!

Volume XI, Issue 6

July 2009



Ponders Calendar

POND BINGO!

General Meeting

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

Program: Take a break from your summer gardening activities and come enjoy the camaraderie of fellow water gardeners and play POND BINGO! This is your chance to share personal ponding experiences, and to ask questions. There are PRIZES to be won!

Our host and hostess for Pond Bingo are club members Wayne and Anne-Lee Tomczyk. Wayne serves as club Secretary.

Refreshments: Mark and Lois Cocker
Share your extra plants & stuff!



Board Meetings Date/Location

Thursday, **July 16th**, Minami Residence, 7:30 PM (*This is a reschedule of the June 14th meeting.*)

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

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



NOTEWORTHY:

We now have nine water gardens for the '09 fall tour. *We are still looking for gardens in Central Tucson.* Call Elizabeth Good, Tour Chair, 722-6449, email: gandegood@msn.com or Renee Shane-Boyd, Co-Chair, 326-5897, email: rshaneboyd@gmail.com. This is your chance to showcase that water garden that you really, really love!

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Desert Connections Botanical Garden Project

The concept of a Botanical Garden for Tucson's Desert View High School is coming to life –plant by plant, and boulder by boulder! George Meisch, who is a Counselor at Desert View (and 2008 Watergardener member), took a “second hat” as project manager and mentor to students in the school's gardening club. That club is named **Desert Connections**.

In 2006, The Tucson Watergardeners approved a \$1,280 grant to help develop the pond portion of the Desert Connections Botanical Garden. That pond went from planning to reality in April of this year!

Development of this botanical garden continues to be a multi-year effort and certainly provides students with valuable experience in administration, fund raising, aesthetics, garden design, and planting. For example,

the welding class helped fabricate and install the wrought iron fence surrounding the garden; the special education class helped plant and weed; science classes did research supporting the garden; and, the Jobs for Arizona Graduates classes also helped.

This project has involved students and teachers, as well as funding and donated materials from several organizations and commercial business interests in Tucson. In 2006, The Tucson Watergardeners approved a \$1,280 grant to help develop the pond portion of the Desert Connections Botanical Garden. *That pond went from planning to reality in April of this year!* The main portion of the pond measures approximately 12'x14' and is supported by Firestone EPDM liner. The Desert View design also includes a waterfall

and stream section that is about 20 feet in length, with four shallow pond sections. The pond is supported by a Tsunami 4800 GPH pump system, as well as a biological filter. Actual installation of the pond components, as well as the surrounding boulders and Catalina mountain rock, was done by Mike Coffey of Desert Streams & Waterfalls, Inc., in Tucson. Plants and fish are now being introduced into this new ecosystem.

Meisch stated that the next step is to add rocks to line the sides, hiding the vinyl liner, and to wash the ¾" to 1.5" river rock on hand for the pond bottom. Now that the pond has been established, surrounding landscaping and boulder setting will continue into the next school year. There are also plans to expand the drip system.

Creation of the Desert View High School Botanical Garden has enabled students to learn what success feels like through the art of communication, negotiation and compromise (not to mention hard work)!

B. Alvarius!

You may very well find one of these guys this summer hanging around your pond or bog garden areas.



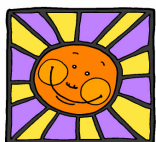
He's the Sonoran Desert Toad (*Bufo alvarius*), known for secreting a poison through its warts and glands that can make a dog or cat seriously ill. The poison chemicals belong to the family of hallucinogenic tryptamines. This carnivorous, semi-aquatic toad is most active at night, eating small rodents, insects, small reptiles and other toad species. It is indigenous to California, Arizona, and New Mexico. *B. Alvarius* can create a considerable tadpole population in your pond area, so, be vigilant!



Tucson's Monsoon Season

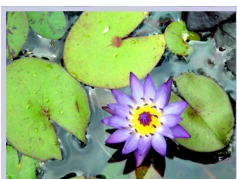
Our Monsoon Season started June 15th and ends September 30th —Dewpoint or no Dewpoint! Here's a couple of water gardening reminders to help you through the summer:

- *Monsoon time is mosquito control time.* Make sure that you have mosquito-eating fish; that your ponds and water garden containers have good circulation; and, use Mosquito Dunks™. *Empty anything that can hold standing, stagnant water.*
- *Maintaining high quality water is challenging during our hot summer weather.* Your pump should be re-circulating and filtering the total volume of water in your pond once every 2-6 hours; keep your pump operating 24 hours a day; advise a 10% water change monthly —draining 10% of water (good for watering those terrestrial plants) and adding 10% new, fresh water; rinse filter pads regularly, but leave some of that good bacteria; and, empty skimmers.



Watergardening Classifieds

Tropical Water Lilies in a Dixie Cup!



The club is offering wonderful *starter tropical* water lilies, such as Panama Pacific, Tina, Albert Greenberg, and night bloomers Texas

Shell and Red Flare. Priced at \$10.00 a plant (a real bargain by retail or internet prices!), these tropical beauties will be available at our upcoming July General Meeting. First come—first pick!

Cattail Plants Wanted. Have established new pond/bog area and need cattails. Contact Simon at 574-2190.

President's Corner

Hi Ponders,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Holiday weekend, over the 4th of July and that everyone is having a great summer. I again want to thank everyone that helped with the annual Plant Sale. Many hands make quick work. We have so many talented members and it is always a pleasure working with you.

Fall is just around the corner and that means a couple of things for the Tucson Watergardeners:

1.) **Pond Tour;** and 2.) **Board Member Elections.**

We will need many volunteers for the Pond Tour again this year. If you are able to help, in any way, on September 19th and 20th with the Pond Tour please contact Elizabeth Good or myself.

We have several Officer and Director positions that will be opening up this fall. I urge anyone that has an interest in becoming a Board member to contact me. It is a great way to become active in the organization and to make your voice heard. We are always looking for new ideas.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the July meeting. *Pond Bingo!* YEA!

Happy Summer Pondering!

Paul Roberts

Check Out Our Web Site:

<http://tucsonwatergardeners.org/>

Gardening is a matter of your enthusiasm
holding up until your back gets used to it.

- Anonymous

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To promote an appreciation of... ponds, bogs, fountains, wildlife, and aquatic plants.

Aquatic Plant Profile



Fiber Optic Grass
Isolepis cernua
Family: Cyperaceae

(Photo courtesy the Minami watergarden.)

Several of the ornamental grasses are bog lovers, and the Fiber Optic Grass is no exception! This is a bog loving, moist soil loving plant that does very well in our desert water gardens. With its arching slender green leaves, it is also referred to as a Mop Sedge. Small flowers on the tips of its leaves give the plant an appearance of fiber optic lights — hence, its name.

This eye-catching perennial sedge grows in clumps from 10"-12" in height, and can be propagated by dividing root clumps in the spring. However, its crown needs to be kept above water level. Fiber Optic Grass does well in our desert range of full sun to partial shade and can add a lot of texture, when interspersed among other marginal plantings.

The plant is poisonous if ingested, and can cause skin irritation. Fiber Optic Grass is native to Europe and North Africa.