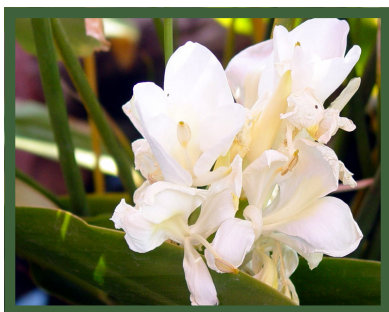


Ponderings

Spring! It's All About Our Plants!



The fragrant White Butterfly
Ginger Lily—Exotic Marginals
For Our March Program!

Our March focus is on aquatic plants. This is the time to divide, repot, fertilize, and, the most favorite part—swap plants with fellow water gardeners and acquire new ones!

Our own Pam Glenn, will be speaking on marginal plants, particularly those that attract hummingbirds and butterflies to the pond. Pam wants *LOTS* of discussion, so bring pictures or samples of your favorite colorful marginals! Here's a sneak preview of what will be featured: Oxy-moron papyrus; Butterfly Ginger and Variegated Shell Ginger; Sagittaria; Cardinal flower; Chameleon plant; Neptune's Crown; Obedient plant—and the list goes on!



Membership application available at:
<http://tucsonwatergardeners.org/>

Volume XI, Issue 2

March 2009



NOTEWORTHY:

Pay your membership by our March general meeting to be included in the 2009 Directory!

New Rates

As of January 1, 2009:

\$ 20.00 Individual

\$ 25.00 Household



Ponders Calendar

General Meeting

Thursday, Mar 26th 7:30 PM @ Junior
League of Tucson 2099 E River Road

Program: Interesting & Colorful Additions to Your Watergarden by Pam Glenn (member & May Plant Sale Chair)

Refreshments: C. Case & E. Good
Share your extra plants & stuff!

Board Meetings Date/Location

Wednesday, **March 18th**, C. Case Residence, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, **April 8th**, C. Case Residence, 7:00 PM

Inside this issue:

<i>Plant Dividing Time!</i>	2
<i>Floating Islands</i>	3
<i>Aquatic Plant Profile:</i>	4
<i>Pistia Stratiotes</i>	

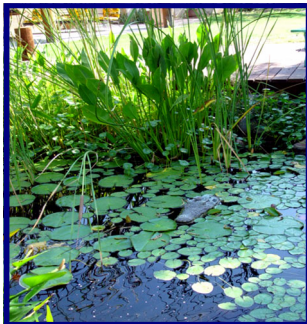
President's Corner

This is my first column, so pardon me while I "ponder." The garden pond has a history that is as old as civilization itself. Whether you study the ancient Egyptians, the Chinese, the Greeks, the Romans, or the Incas, you will find that each developed ways of using water to create settings that would enhance their homes or draw attention to their architecture or sculptures. The pond provides a place of solitude where you can sit and ponder on life—for water is the giver of life.

I feel that water gardening slows down hectic lifestyles, improves everyday attitudes and contributes toward good general health.

I encourage all members to become more involved in the Tucson Watergardeners. Everyone has something to contribute, whether it is time, knowledge, ideas, or expertise. The purpose of our organization is to promote water gardening thru education. You, yes YOU, have knowledge to share with others members and guests. So... help your fellow water gardeners ponder and be healthy!

Paul Roberts



A SPECIAL INVITATION

Water and Bog Gardens
September 19th- 20th
Public Tour

If you are a private individual, we invite you to showcase your water garden on our Public Tour.

If you are a commercial nursery, water garden and/or landscaping specialist, or gardening society, we invite you to showcase your water garden projects on our Public Tour.

All types of water and bog gardens will be considered throughout the Tucson Valley.

CONTACTS:

Elizabeth Good, Public Tour Chair

722-6449 email: gandegood@msn.com

Renee Shane-Boyd, Public Tour Co-Chair

326-5897 email: rshaneboyd@gmail.com

As a non-profit organization, proceeds of this tour will benefit the Club's Grant Program.

Plant Dividing Time!

Spring is the time to divide your water plants. Division can also be done in the fall. There are different techniques, depending on the type of aquatic plant. First, you need to get organized! Gather all your materials and tools close at hand, before you reach for those plants. Things on your list: plastic sheet or tarp to contain the mess; watering hose; planting medium for your aquatics; fertilizer spikes or granules; a sufficient number of pots or containers suitable for all the divided water plants; pea gravel or other small rocks; hand spade, garden shears, and, if the task is big, a shovel or even a power Sawzall type tool. Plan the size of your pots to allow for a couple of year's worth of growth, so that you are only re-potting every two to three years. Working in the shade is preferable, and, keeping your plants wet at all times during the dividing process is a must. Some folks also prefer working with rubber gloves to help protect their hands.

Reserve your "extras" for our **May 17th Annual Plant Sale!** Remember that bringing already potted plants to our sale allows the club to charge a bit more and helps our Grant Fund coffers.

You can use a garden hose to gently wash away the soil, leaving the entire root system exposed. This works well on waterlilies. Some of the marginals, such as sedges, may have such an entanglement of roots engulfing the pot that cutting or breaking the container may be the only solution to extracting the plant.

Hardy and tropical waterlilies prefer pots that are shallow and wide. A 2-to 5-gallon container is ideal. Hint: A great source for inexpensive plastic pots is discount stores. Fill half the pot with planting medium and a fertilizer spike to ensure abundant blooms. Tropical water lilies should be planted *at the center* of the pot. Hardy water lilies need to be planted *at the side* of the pot at about a 45° angle, with the growing end of the rhizome pointed toward the middle of the pot. Crowns must be left uncovered. Gently cover the root with another thin layer of a soil/sand mix and top with a recommended 1" layer of pea gravel to hold the waterlily in place. Wet the soil mixture in the pot, then gently lower the newly potted plant back into the water. Six inches of water covering the crown is a great start. As the waterlily grows, the pot can be lowered to an 18"-24" depth.

If the marginal being repotted is a bulb plant, then gently pull the bulbs apart by hand. Plants, such as reeds, with creeping roots may be divided by levering apart the roots. Cut off old roots, remove dead leaves, and trim top growth back to 3-4 inches. Add planting medium below the roots and around the sides, being careful not to cover the crown. A long-lasting fertilizer spike or time release granules assures growth and healthy blooms. Just as with the waterlilies, a 1" layer of pea gravel helps hold both the soil and plant in place. Be sure to wet the planting medium before lowering the pot back into the pond.

Underwater, oxygenating plants can simply be weighted and dropped to the bottom of the pond (or at least 12" below the surface), or placed in a container with just pea gravel.

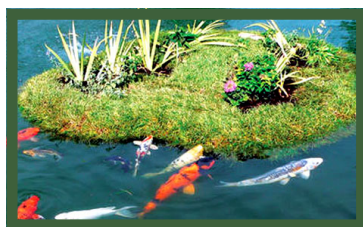
Floating Islands

The opportunity to divide your aquatic plants, as well as to acquire new ones, goes hand-in-hand with the larger chore of spring pond clean-up. In the process of evaluating your aquatic plant inventory for the new water gardening season, it's a great time to be thinking of innovative approaches to planning your aquatic plantscape. Potting, arranging, and trying new aquatic plant specimens is a delightful, continuing saga in personalizing your water garden.

Have you ever thought about floating planters –or even a floating island? The floating islands we have in mind are not the creamy, custard European dessert kind! Floating islands have been around quite awhile – even with entire civilizations building their own islands of bundled dried reeds and living on them. The Uros people of Lake Titicaca in South America are an example of this lifestyle. Large manufactured islands are also common in industrial settings to treat wastewater or storm water.

On a smaller scale, a variety of floating island structures are commercially available to water gardeners. Basically, the floating

islands used by water gardeners are buoyant mats generally made of recycled polyester fiber, with removable plugs for easy planting. A light weight planting medium (such as unscented, non-clumping kitty litter) is then used to start the aquatic plants, with the plant roots growing through the island to reach into the water. The wide range of marginal aquatic plants that do well in our desert environment will also do well in a floating



island environment.

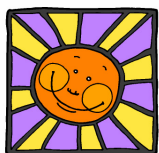
Benefits of incorporating a floating island into your pond include plant roots absorbing nutrients that create algae; creating shade, shelter and spawning opportunities for fish; creating habitats for other aquatic creatures such as frogs and turtles; having a self-watering system; and, the

addition of aesthetic interest and a real focal point.

Floating island products can be as small as 3 square feet in diameter, and go to dimensions well beyond 18 square feet. Many of these products come with a warranty, and generally begin with about a \$90.00 purchase price. How many and how large is a matter of personal taste. Islands can also be linked together, and can either freely float on the pond's surface, or be tethered.

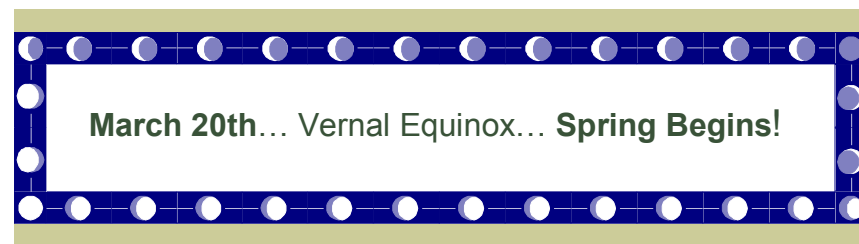
Far less expensive than floating islands, floating planters are also available –many for under \$25.00. This product is essentially a planter with a polyethylene foam collar to keep it afloat. There are also “donut-shaped” barley straw planters, with a Styrofoam insert to keep them afloat. The barley straw helps keep pond water clear.

For the 2009 water gardening season, create a floating “bouquet” of aquatic marginal and bog plants, varying heights, textures and shapes, as well as bloom times.



Watergardening Classifieds

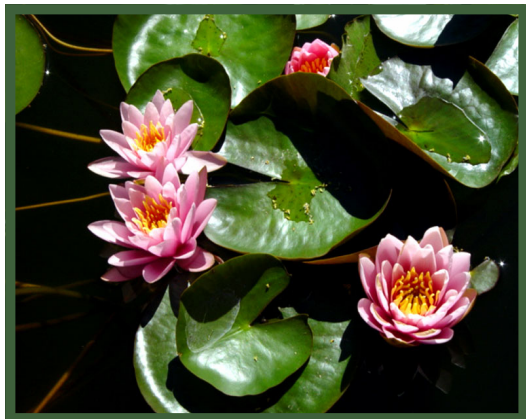
Sell or Trade Water Garden Items. Ad space is *free* to members! Write-ups on your water garden items must be in to the editor by the 4th of each month.



President:	Paul Roberts	paulrwi@aol.com
Vice President:	Ken Canada	kcanada1@cox.net
Treasurer:	Bill Hudson	lloydhudson@cox.net
Secretary:	Wayne Tomczyk	waynet@us.ibm.com
Membership Recruitment:	Tony Shrader	bluee3t@yahoo.com
Programs:	<u><i>Need a Committee Chair!</i></u>	
Webmaster:	HL Swain	hl@swain.net
Editor:	JoAn Stolley	jstolley@cox.net



The Tucson Watergardeners
7033 E Paseo San Andres
Tucson, AZ 85710



To promote an appreciation and understanding of water gardening...

Aquatic Plant Profile



What's so special about Pistia Stratiotes from the Araceae family?

We desert water gardeners have plenty of these fast multipliers by mid-summer, and are composting our excess free floaters by fall. Winter usually finishes the plants off completely. If any plants survive in the winter pond, they are usually quite puny and yellowish by spring-time!

Well, we can just debunk the myth that **water lettuce** can't be wintered in Southern Arizona! Sheri Anderson and Johnnie Guy (TTW members) have proven that by the looks of these pictures taken this past February (last month) of their thriving water lettuce!



Sheri and Johnnie wintered their water lettuce by simply placing a Plexiglas sheet over the tub and then letting our winter Arizona sun do the rest. That's it!

We all want these "floating heads of lettuce" *early* in the spring to begin covering our ponds to prevent algae growth. The long, feathery roots of the water lettuce also provide fish spawning habitats. Now we know how to make that happen! Thank you for sharing your pictures and secrets!

Winter water lettuce even took over Sheri and Johnnie's lily pond, but the first hardy lily bloom of early March prevailed!