

# Ponderings

Official  
Newsletter of  
The Tucson  
Watergardeners



**Our Desert  
Summertime  
...And The  
Water Lilies  
Are Lovin' It!**

**Volume XII, Issue 6**

**July 2010**



## **NOTEWORTHY:**

*Our 2010 membership directory is being published in combination with this newsletter. Keep it as a handy reference. Also included is a copy of the club's by-laws.*



## **Ponders Calendar**

### **General Meeting**

**Thursday, July 22nd 7:30 PM**

@ Junior League of Tucson  
2099 E River Road

**Program: UofA PhD Candidates &  
2009/2010 Biosphere 2 Fellows  
Present!**

Ms. Alandra Kahl and Ms. Chris Goforth will be speaking about their individual projects as part of the Biosphere 2 (B2) Earthscience Program. Our club contributed aquatic plants to these projects during 2010. Come learn about trace organic compounds, wetlands, aquatic bugs, dragonflies —and much more!

### **Board Meetings Date/Location**

**Change! Change!**  
**Thursday, July 15th,**  
**7:00 PM**  
The McMackens

**Refreshments:** Barbara Phillips *Thank you!*  
*Share your extra plants & stuff!*

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## 2011 Officer & Board Member Nominations

Since our club was established in 1999, a series of energetic individuals have assumed leadership positions and contributed much to the growth, maturity, and direction of The Tucson Watergardeners. For this legacy of volunteer hours and service to the club, we are all grateful!

Now, it is not too early to be thinking about our new slate of 2011 Officers and Board members for leading our club. Our by-laws state that Officers may not be elected for more than two consecutive one-year terms in any one position. The key position meeting this criteria will be the election of a new *President*.

Other positions that are up for re-election include: *Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Board positions.*

Rod Minami is heading the Nomination Slate. Please give serious thought to filling one of these vacancies. *It's important for the growth of our club.* Rod can be reached at [rminami@cox.net](mailto:rminami@cox.net) or 760-5565. He will also be available at our public meetings to answer any questions you may have—and to accept nominations! Let's hear from *YOU!*

## Water Quality & Other Summer Maintenance Items



Maintaining a high quality of water is key to the health of our ponds, and, this can be particularly challenging in our desert summer heat. Remember that a clear pond doesn't always indicate healthy water, as you can't "see" the nitrites, nitrates, and ammonia and protein build-ups.

As water gardeners, assure that your pond has plenty of aquatic plants, particularly marginals and floaters—both types of plants are extremely important to water filtration and water quality. Other suggestions:

- Routinely clean your filters—especially important for ponds with large fish populations.
- Don't over feed your fish populations.
- A 10% monthly water exchange is highly advisable. This means that 10% of the existing pond water will be drained (great for terrestrial plants), and 10% new, fresh water will be added to the pond. This process rids the water of mineral/biological/bacterial overloads.
- Routine water testing is helpful. A healthy water pH level is generally between 6.5 and 7.5, with 7.0 (neutral) being ideal. Testing in the morning before plants become active and the pH levels go up is suggested.

Finally, assure that mosquito breeding grounds aren't being created in the form of standing water, watering cans, fountains, buckets, rain barrels, slow moving streams, birdbaths—or anything else that will hold standing, stagnant water. Remember, we are in our monsoon season! Larvicide, such as Mosquito Dunks™, releases bacteria that are not harmful to pond plants, other aquatic life, pets, or people.

We are planning a "Tour Central" to be held in conjunction with this year's 2010 Public Water Garden Tour scheduled for September 25th/26th. Part of Tour Central will be the sale of water garden related items, including aquatic plants. As you repot your summer bounty of plants, setting aside potted plants for this fall sale would be most appreciated! Proceeds from Tour Central will go into the club's Grant Fund.

## Members' Feedback

We have had several items come up over this past month. While not directly related to each other, they are certainly most interesting to share among our members!

### *Killing Water Lily Aphids.*

A past club President reports that laying newspaper on top of the lily pads (won't sink—pads hold it up) for a few hours (preferably at night) gets rid of the aphids. They are GONE! Thank you, Gail!

### *Follow up to our May "Turtle Talk."*

Lee Oler has provided us additional follow-up from May's "The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Turtles in Your Pond" program. She went back to Dr. James Jarchow, Orange Grove Animal Hospital, who expanded on the question about thiaminase and why we should not feed goldfish to our turtles. Many fish species have thiaminase in their tissues, advises Dr. Jarchow.



## Watergardening Classifieds

**Free Slider Turtles.** Free red eared-slider turtles, male, female or pairs. I love them, but I have too many for my small pond. Call Karen at 979-6201.



**Free Fish!** I have about 25 fish that I need to find homes for *before* August 7th. There are gold fish and koi, ranging in size from 6" to 26". Email me at: dfbunker37@yahoo.com—D.F. Bunker.

**Tropical Lilies.** We still have a good selection of tropical water lilies for sale, including Queen of Siam; Tina; Lindsey Woods; Albert Greenberg; Panama Pacific; and Director George T. Moore. All plants are \$15.00 each. Contact JoAn at 760-5565.

**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.

### *Gardenisms*

"To a gardener there is nothing more exasperating than a hose that just isn't long enough."

--Cecil Roberts

Healthy goldfish, shad, smelt, cod, halibut and many other species normally have relatively high concentrations. We aren't affected by eating these fish, because we cook it, which destroys the thiaminase enzyme. (The fish species used for sushi generally don't have much thiaminase.) Thus, one should avoid feeder goldfish, which are heavily dosed with antibiotics, as a steady diet for aquatic turtles.

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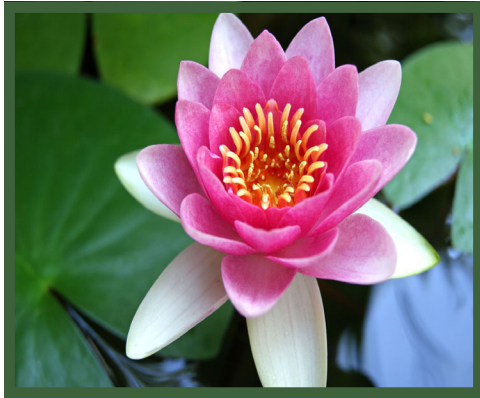
### *Raccoon Repellant.*

Some of our members report that powdered predator urine (coyote, specifically) that is sprinkled around the perimeter of a pond or yard is a good deterrent for keeping raccoons at bay. It does have to be reapplied, particularly after a rain, and is not long-lasting. Raccoons have a highly refined sense of smell and will avoid any area with a hint of "coyote." Predator deterrent products can generally be obtained through feed and livestock stores, or, through the internet.





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“To promote responsible ideals of water gardening among our members.”



## This ‘n That

Hello Fellow Watergardeners!

We'd love to see digital pictures of your water gardens and ponds in their full summer bloom! Please send any "jpegs" you would like to share to our Editor. As you know, our October 28th final general meeting includes a slide show of our watergardening year in review. This is a fantastic opportunity to show off your work and "green thumbs"!

We'll have detailed information next month on our upcoming September Public Pond Tour. Getting enough volunteers for each of the gardens on tour is our next priority.

It's summertime, so relax, kick back, and enjoy your personal garden oasis!

Paul Roberts



If you want to fill in a bog area really fast, then the perennial *Mentha Aquatica* is your answer! Also known as Aquatic Mint, Water Mint, or Marsh Mint from the family Lamiaceae, this plant has very high moisture needs and is at-

tractive to bees, butterflies, and birds. Lavender flowers appear mid to late summer. Aquatic mint is also used as a home remedy for a number of ailments. But watch it, this plant can be very invasive!