

Ponderings

Official
Newsletter of
The Tucson
Watergardeners

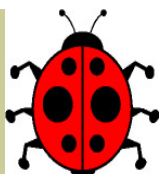


Floating Plants Love Our Summer Watergardens!

They're good for shading water from algae growth and providing hiding and spawning places for small fish. Pictured is Water Lettuce with Yerba Mansa runners.

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Ponders Calendar

General Meeting

Thursday, July 28th 7:30 PM at the
Junior League of Tucson 2099 E. River
Road

Program: POND BINGO!

It's our summer tradition. Play and win prizes! Most importantly, learn a bit more about water gardening in the desert. This is your opportunity to share ponding experiences (*the good, the bad, the ugly*) and to ask questions.

Refreshments: Barbara Phillips
Jean Walkosak

Thank you!

Share your extra plants & stuff!



Summer Taro

Board Meetings Date/Location

Thursday, July 21,
6:30 PM, Murphy-
Wilmot Library,
530 N. Wilmot
Road. *Please be
p r o m p t !
Membership is
welcome to attend.*

NOTEWORTHY:

Mark Sunday,
**September 25th, 2:00
PM** for the club's outing
to the International
Wildlife Museum to see
its ponds which are a
habitat for endangered
species in Arizona —
fish, turtles & frogs! A
Museum lecturer will be
available. The club is
providing refreshments.
*There will be no 4th
Thursday evening
meeting in September.*

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Cannas! Cannas!

Many of our watergardens have cannas.

We place them along side our streams; in our biofilters; in a pond's marginal areas; and, even by themselves in specially made bog areas. *Why?* Their beautiful foliage, height, textures, summer-long colorful blooms, and easy care and propagation techniques give us strong features for our desert watergardens. It's also a plant that has many lines of cultivars.

Canna is the only genus in the family Cannaceae. They are sometimes called canna lilies; however, they are not a true lily. It originated as a plant of the tropics, but has been cultivated to grow in more temperate climates. The gingers, bananas, and heliconias are some of its closest relatives. In addition, it is one of the world's richest starch sources, and is an agricultural, as well as an ornamental plant.

Cannas grow best in full sun. For our desert dwelling cannas, planting in moist soil, or lowering a potted canna into the water works well. Propagating a canna plant is done simply by dividing and replanting its rhizomes.

A large number of ornamental cultivars have been developed with spectacular blooms and foliage colors. These cultivars are classified by groups. For example: the Foliage Group is cultivated, as its name implies, for dramatic foliage, and has much smaller flowers (e.g., Canna Auguste Ferrier with its pink/purple/green foliage coloring); the Premier Group has large, circular shape blooms to show off blossom color (e.g., Canna Karla Dalebo with its large orange/yellow spotted blooms); the Miniature Group (e.g., Canna Puck with its off white blossoms) has cultivars under 19" high; and, the Aquatic Group (e.g., Canna Ra with its yellow blooms) characteristically has lance-shaped foliage and long, thin rhizomes. Longwood Gardens, Kennet Square, PA, has been very active in cultivating a variety of aquatic cannas.

There is also a Water Canna (*Canna glauca*), sometimes called a Louisiana Canna or Maraca amarilla. It is a member of the Cannaceae family. As a marsh plant, its flowers are generally smaller, and narrower. Its leaves can be more narrow and blade like.



Pre-Formed Pool—Bog Area Of Cannas

A little known fact is that Cannas are used to extract many undesirable pollutants in a wetland environment, as they have a high tolerance to contaminants.

There are literally hundreds of interesting cultivars to be acquired and experimented with in our desert pond environment. *Perhaps you have an unusual canna to share with our membership—or at a future plant sale?*

SUMMERTIME REMINDERS

- Keep your filters and skimmers cleaned in this hot weather, especially if you have a heavy fish or turtle population;
- A 10% monthly pond water change is advisable to get rid of mineral/biological/bacterial overloads which are not visible to the eye;
- Look for sources of standing water, e.g., pot saucers, tubs, bird baths, etc. to eliminate mosquito breeding areas during our monsoon season; and,
- An easy way to fertilize those water lilies in the middle of your pond is with a long, hollow pole to reach the pots and push the fertilizer tabs into the planting medium.

Something To Know....

Other H2O Types of Gardening

Hydroponics is a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions, in water, without soil. Terrestrial plants may be grown with their roots in the mineral nutrient solution only or in an inert medium, such as perlite, gravel, or coconut husk.

Aquaponics is a sustainable food production system that combines the raising of aquatic animals (e.g., fish such as Tilapia and Yellow Perch, prawns, etc.) with hydroponics (cultivating plants in water). It is a symbiotic environment in that the fish by-products are filtered out by the plants as vital nutrients, after which the cleansed water is recirculated back to the animals. Did you know that the University of Arizona has a Controlled Environment Aquaponics Greenhouse?

Hydroponics or Aquaponics might be something to think about in planning a new pond and/or greenhouse design.

Both Hydroponics and Aquaponics are done in highly controlled environments.



Those wonderful Colorado Hardy Water Lilies!



Watergardening Classifieds

Fish Mate UV+Bio Pond Filter 16 W.

A gently used pond filter, purchased in 2007, has been graciously donated to the club for resale. Asking price is \$50.00; original price just under \$200.00. Contact your Editor for more information.

Fertilizer Spikes & Tabs. If you are running low, these items will be available at our monthly meeting. \$5.00 per pack.

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

Officer & Board Directory

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Aquatic Plant Profile



Pink Butterfly Flower *Asclepias incarnata* (also known as the Swamp Milkweed, Rose Milkweed, Swamp Silkweed, and White Indian Hemp) is a herbaceous, perennial plant species native to North America and is in the family Asclepiadaceae. It does very well in our desert water gardens, positioned in full or partial sun. This hardy bog plant does not like dry soil conditions.

Attractive to butterflies and other pollinators, this plant grows upright --and can grow over 3' tall. Blooming occurs in mid to late summer. It can also draw hummingbirds for its nectar.

After blooming; long, relatively thin, rounded pods are produced that grow uprightly. The pods split open in late summer to late fall, releasing seeds that are attached to silky hairs, which act as parachutes that carry the seeds on the currents of the wind. This system of dispersing seed is similar to other milkweed plants. Like most other milkweeds, it has sap containing toxic chemicals, a characteristic that repels insects and herbivorous animals.