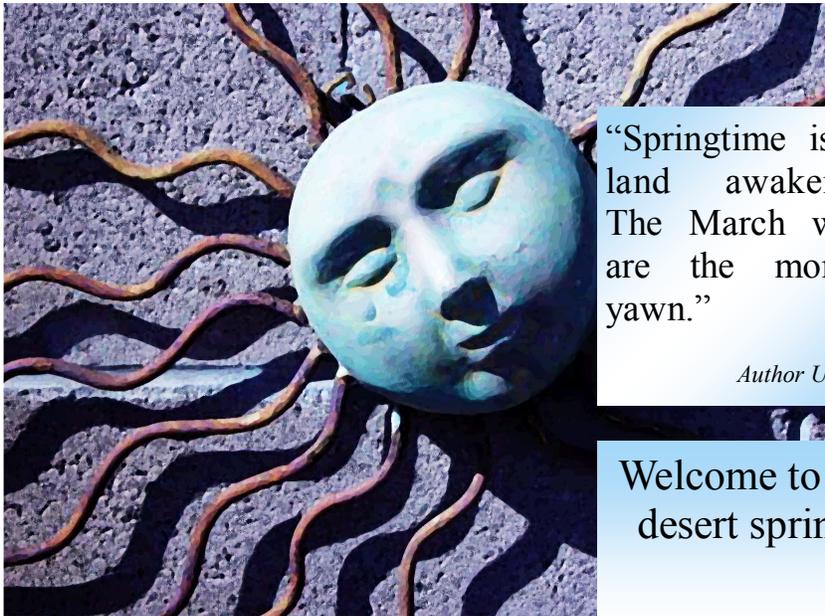


Ponderings

Official
Newsletter of
The Tucson
Watergardeners

Volume XIII Issue 2

March 2011



“Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.”

Author Unknown

Welcome to our
desert spring!



NOTEWORTHY:

March 31st is the deadline for renewing your annual membership dues. Rates until March 31st are \$20.00 for individual membership and \$25.00 for household. On April 1st, dues will increase by \$5.00 to \$25.00 for individual and \$30.00 for household memberships. Checks should be sent to Treasurer, P.O. Box 57664, Tucson, AZ 85732-7664



Ponders Calendar

General Meeting

Thursday, **March 24th** 7:30 PM @
Junior League of Tucson 2099 East
River Road

**Program: “ Spring Cleaning & Pond
Start-Up“** by Carl Ragel, owner of Carl
Ragel’s Natural Pools & Gardens

Refreshments by Casey Case and
Nancy & Steve McCue

Thank you!

Share your extra plants & stuff!

Board Meetings Date/Location

Next Board meeting
date to be set.

Fertilizer spikes, club
t-shirts, hats & visors
are sold at our general
meetings. Exact
change is appreciated!

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Pond Plant Shelves

Spring is an excellent time to think about our pond plant shelves. *Why?*

It's that critical component for water gardening with marginal plants. Bog plants and marginals come in a wide array of colors and shapes offering unparalleled possibilities for your water gardening. A careful selection arranged imaginatively can make the transition from pond to garden appear seamless and adds a whole new dimension to any water feature.

A novice water gardener is absolutely delighted when the pond is dug or a pre-formed pond is firmly situated in the ground and filled with water. Next, the pump is turned on and those first fish and a water lily or two are introduced into this new pond. That's fine –and is as it should be! However, with maturity of both the pond and the water gardener, thoughts turn to the idea of ecosystems and of incorporating plants just as you would do to create your landscape.

Accommodating a spectacular array of marginals in our desert summers, with their roots in the water, but their foliage and flowers standing clear of the surface and delighting us visually, requires pond shelves. Here's a good definition: A pond feature, typically created in one area or around the entire perimeter of a pond. Set several inches below the surface, and wide enough to hold a pot, it's used for marginal plants that will not grow in deeper water. Ideally, if you have been fortunate to design the pond yourself, plant shelves should be at least 8" deep and 12" wide.

Limited plant shelving is available in all pre-formed ponds. If you are designing a pond, then ample plant shelves are easy enough to construct, using the liner. Flagstone, or a similar flat stone product, is used as the shelf floor. A large overhanging flat stone, strategically placed, can also provide shade for fish, but be sure it is fixed firmly in place, and capable of taking any weight which might be placed on it later. Even if you have inherited an otherwise perfectly good pond without a single shelf, all is not lost – and the end result of creating shelving is certainly worth the effort.

If you need pond plant shelves –or need to add more, here are some ideas:

- Use excess pond liner and wrap concrete

blocks, just as a gift package and secure with silicone aquarium sealer. If a "table" is desired, wrap pond vinyl over scrap plywood. The idea of wrapping is to prevent any tears in the pond liner or leeching of the wood, as shelves are placed or moved around the pond.

- PVC pipe plant stands. These can be designed and cut to your exact specifications. A PVC pipe cutter and PVC cement are essential tools. Many water gardeners trek to local discount stores for inexpensive plastic kitchen or shallow storage containers as the pot of choice for these stands. Heavy duty polyethylene mortar mixing pans can also be used.
- The larger black nursery pots, placed upside down, can serve as a plant shelf. There is a word of caution about using plastic crates, particularly if your pond has aquatic turtle inhabitants. These creatures can easily get tangled in small openings and drown.



- Although a bit more expensive, rectangular-shaped terra cotta or clay chimney flue liners –very common in the southwest, can be placed horizontally in the pond to show off specimen plants, as well as support pond art work above the water level.

- Floating islands are yet another option for your marginal gardening.

As you plan for your aquatic marginal garden, it is helpful to think about groupings. For example, you may want to devote pond shelf areas to hardy marginals, such as Cardinal Flowers, White Pickerel Rush, or Zebra Bulrush. Another shelf grouping could include tropical marginals, such as the Aquatic Cannas, Umbrella Palm, Taros, Bog Lilies or Thalia. Pond shelving could also be arranged for sun loving and shade loving marginals, or by the height of each marginal, such as moving from the low growing Water

Pond Plant Shelves Continued

Continued from Page 2.

Hysop in the foreground to the towering Egyptian Papyrus in the background.

Pond shelving has many side benefits. Your marginal garden softens the transition between pond and your other hardscape. Shelving can provide protection and shade for fish and other pond critters. If used properly, marginal plantings can deter pond predators. However, if shelving is left without plants, that's a sure invitation for unwanted visitors to easily enter your pond! Planting on a shelf in the shallows also stops the fish from being able to get at the plants and root them!

As we do our spring pond cleaning and plant dividing, this is the opportune time to transform and group our marginals for color, interest, and growth patterns.

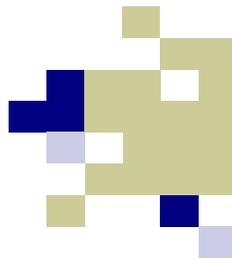
The reward for our efforts? Enjoyment of a richly diverse marginal garden at the height of our desert summer growing season!

If you have pond shelving ideas and successes (or failures), please share them with our membership and write to our editor!



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.



If you enjoy developing programs; making new contacts; teaching gardening topics; doing press releases; writing; organizing tours; or hosting a general meeting to show off your pond, we could sure use your help over the coming year. We are a totally volunteer organization. Any time you can give to these tasks will be greatly appreciated by our membership.

Clip and save these corrections!

Your 2011 Board Officers & Directors

President: Paul Roberts paul.robertstwg@yahoo.com

Note corrected email address for Paul.

Vice President: Dan Jenks pdq211@yahoo.com
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Secretary: Wayne Tomczyk waynet@us.ibm.com
Past President: Elizabeth Good gandegood@msn.com

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Steve Walkosak steve@x-streamponds.com

Note corrected email address for Steve.

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Editor: JoAn Stolley jstolley@cox.net



The Tucson Watergardeners
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Tucson, AZ 85710



To help develop an interest in the creation and care of water gardens...

A Word From Our Lily Moms!

Tropical Water Lily Mom Casey Case Says



“The lilies are thriving in the warm water and the humidity, from keeping them covered. They are due to get a little chunk of fertilizer pretty soon to make them even happier. There should be one or two that we didn't have last year; Dauben & Shirley Bryne. There will be predominately bright pinks and purples, though Dauben is very pale, almost white. We will do pre-sales again this year.”

Hardy Water Lily Mom Jane Canada Says



“The hardies survived our winter just fine. In fact, the first leaves are popping up out of the water. I'm planning on 60 plants for our May Plant Sale in whites, yellows, pinks, and reds (about 10 each). We will also have about 16 “unknown” color water lilies available. A special thank you for everyone who answered my classified ad and provided me 1 gallon black nursery pots. I'm set now!”

Reserve your “extras” for our **May 22nd Annual Plant Sale!** *Note the date change.* Remember that bringing already potted plants to our sale allows the club to charge a bit more and helps our Grant Fund coffer.

Plant Sale Chairs:

Dan Jenks

Jane & Ken Canada

Thank you!