

Ponderings

Official
Newsletter of
The Tucson
Watergardeners



A Ponder's Favorite
Riparian Plant—Yerba Mansa

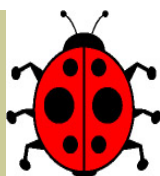
Volume X, Issue 2

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NOTEWORTHY:

Not too early to be thinking of our May Plant Sale. We need aquatic plants — particularly marginals. So, when you begin cutting, chopping, pruning, dividing, transplanting, repotting, and fertilizing —think of our upcoming sale. Putting your extras aside for our sale would be much appreciated!



Ponders Calendar

General Meeting

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

Program: Riparian Plants by Eric Clark
Horticulturist & Landscape Designer
Civano Nursery

Refreshments & Thanks to:
Ray March & Michael Young
Pat Gibb

Surprises for the March raffle!

Board Meetings Date/Location

Next Meeting:

**July 18th
Thursday
7:00 PM**
at the Junior
League of
Tucson

Board Room

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That Five Letter Word!

It's springtime, and the only five letter word that comes to mind is A -L-G-A-E. Many ponders experience algae blooms, either in the form of "green water" or stringy stuff hanging off of waterfalls, rocks, plants, and even masses in the water. Algae survive, grow and reproduce by feeding off the nutrients - nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous, in the water. When pH levels are out of balance, such as a pond warming up in the spring or a new pond, conditions are right for algae growth. Left unchecked, growing algae blooms can lower oxygen levels, and even inhibit the ability of sunlight to penetrate algae scum on the pond surface.

The filamentous type algae, commonly called "string algae" will flourish on waterfalls and in shallow streams because the sunlight is more intense providing more heat and light than what may be in other parts of the pond, and, there is a constant supply of nutrients flowing through it. Pulling it off will get rid of the existing stuff; however, tiny pieces that fall into the pond will cause more string algae growth. An algicide that can be used with plants and fish, such as the popular AlgaeFix®, does a good job of killing what is in the pond at that time. If an algicide is your selected method, read the label very carefully to insure that it will not kill your other pond life, including plants and fish. And, read the directions for the amount of algicide per gallons in your pond and frequency of application. *Too much algicide is not a good thing!*

The battle against algae has to be waged over time -- through either repeat applications of an algicide, or, combined with use of natural enzyme-releasing products such as barley straw or barley straw extract. There are also rock and waterfall cleaners in powdered form that work through oxidation, after you have turned off your waterfall water for a limited period of time. Pond salt or all natural sea salt can also be used to rid algae. However, use a salt remedy with caution. Aquatic plants can be sensitive to salt —and too much salt in the water can also harm your fish.

The short velvet type of algae that covers the liner and everything else in the pond is beneficial. Don't try to kill it, wash it away, or vacuum it up. It helps provide a natural appearance to the pond. It uses nutrients from the water, provides oxygen during the day, and the fish love to nibble on it.

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



JoAnn

I didn't intend to do a column on hummers, but here it goes! If you have water features on your property —and blooming plants, you probably have hummingbirds. That's a large part of the pleasure of desert ponding — to see what arrives in your yard!

I was amazed early February to look up at a pine tree bough and see a hummingbird nest. Yes, indeed, our Costa's Hummingbird sat there through every February freezing night —including our snowfall. Then came one teensy beak over the nest's edge —and we knew an early spring miracle was happening. Everything was OK, until I found the March fledgling in the early a.m. slumped in a corner of our flagstone patio. *What to do?*

To make a long story short, our little guy couldn't be placed back in the nest, as there was a larger sibling occupying the entire space; and, the fledgling's condition was unknown. On the brighter side, what I did find was Tucson Mountain Hummingbird Rescue (non-profit). With a mutual meeting place, our baby bird was turned over to the expert, Noreen Geyer-Kordosky, who is an Arizona State licensed rehabilitator and holds a Federal Migratory Bird Permit. As spring warms and more nesting takes place, Noreen asked me to pass along these guidelines to our gardening community — if you have concerns about a specific hummingbird that may be in trouble:

Injured Adult: Gently pick up hummingbird and place in a covered, ventilated box with soft cloth. Use rolled cloth if the bird needs support. Put the box in a quiet place. Do not hold the hummingbird or give it any fluids without instruction. Call a wildlife rehabilitation licensee.

Young In Nest: Call a wildlife rehabilitation licensee.

Young Out Of Nest: Put young back in nest if possible. If not, transfer bird to a covered, ventilated box with a soft cloth rolled for support and immediately call a wildlife licensee. Put box in a quiet place; if you have a heating pad, adjust to low and place box on the heat. Do not hold the hummingbird or give it any fluids without instruction.

Noreen's numbers: 520-743-0677 (home); 520-240-2686(cell). *Noreen will be a guest speaker this summer.*

Oh, our little female Costa had some major issues, but remains alive and in the rehabilitator's capable hands.

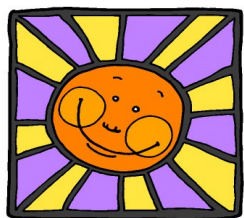
Gardeners: Please consider pruning trees & bushes prior to bird nesting season. Encourage others to do the same. That's easier than attempting to tie, wire, or bungee a branch with a nest back up in its original location!

Membership rates continue at the 2012 level: **Household is \$15.00 and Individual is \$10.00.**

2013 Membership Application is available at:

<http://tucsonwatergardeners.tripod.com/MembershipApp.pdf>

Thanks for taking care of your membership renewal ahead of our May Plant Sale!



Watergardening
Classifieds

Fertilizer Tabs & Spikes. It's not too early to be thinking of dividing and fertilizing our aquatic plants. Price is \$7.00 per package for spikes; \$5.00 for tabs. Exact change at the meeting is appreciated. *Stock up!*

Sell or Trade Watergarden Related Items. Ad space is FREE to our members. Write-ups on your water garden items must be submitted to the editor by the 4th of each month.

Revised Guide Now Available!

A revised and updated version of "**The Tucson Watergardeners Guide To Watergardening In Southern Arizona**" is now available at our web site. The original Guide was published in 2009.

Why a guide? Why a revision? A single guide serves as a one-stop reference for getting started with information on aquatic plants, pond components, and a lot of other water gardening related topics. This revision gathers information that has also appeared across several years of our Ponderings newsletter.

We invite you to browse our latest on-line Guide!

<http://tucsonwatergardeners.tripod.com/WatergardeningGuide2013.pdf>

There's still lots of blanks on our Volunteer White Board. Would you consider adding your name? Kudos to those that signed up at our February meeting!

Your 2013 Board Officers & Directors

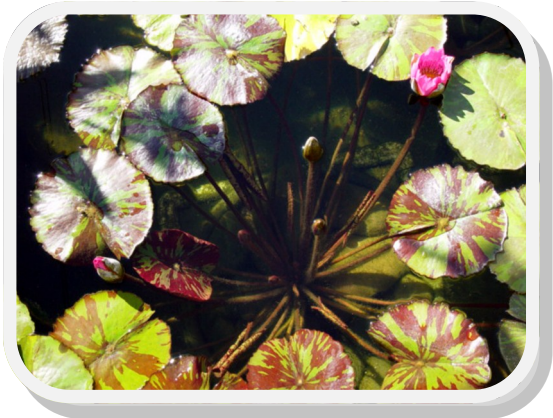
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Tropical Waterlily—Queen of Siam

Our web address: <http://tucsonwatergardeners.org/>

Aquatic Plant Profile



Nymphaea 'Colorado'

The Colorado water lily is a hardy water lily that absolutely loves our desert sun and offers a mass of foliage and prolific blooms. This water lily has pink-peach day-blooming flowers tipped in pale yellow. The plants grow 3-5 feet across, and the flowers stand 3" - 4" above the water's surface. It also has a long blooming season. "Colorado" was hybridized by Dr. Kirk Strawn in 1994. This makes a terrific addition to your aquatic plant collection --and, best of all, it will be well represented at our May Plant Sale, according to our "Hardy Waterlily Mom" - Jane Canada. If you have water lilies already in your pond, don't forget to fertilize each plant this spring to ensure a heavy bloom cycle. Many of our ponders prefer *aquatic fertilizer tabs* applied on a *monthly cycle* for maximum blooms; aquatic fertilizer spikes can also be used, and are usually placed in the plant soil at the beginning of the bloom season.

The earliest dating of water lily species is for the family Nuphar in China in the Early Eocene, approximately 56 million to 40 million years ago. How interesting!