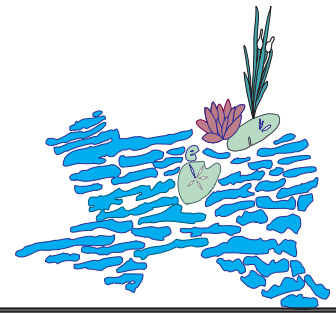


Water Works



Newsletter of the North Texas Water Garden Society October, 2007

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Taking Stock

by David Jones, Master KHA

At the end of summer, we can look back on our ponding season and take stock of what great and not so great things have affected the enjoyment of our ponds. Using a focused approach, we can evaluate many aspects of the pond and fish, how much enjoyment or drudgery it has been, and what we might like to change to make it better for next year.

First, did you enjoy the pond? If so, then you're a "Happy Ponder"—Congratulations!

However, there's always room for improvement, so let's take stock of our pond in three different categories. Take a piece of paper and write these main topics at the head of each section, then divide each section into "Positives" and "Negatives."

- #1 Is your pond environment a wonderful place to be?
- #2 How easy is it to do routine maintenance?
- #3 What do you need to know about water quality and fish health?

Let's take these one at a time and I'll offer some suggestions.

#1. One of the great pleasures in ponding is sitting out next to the pond, watching and feeding your fish, and enjoying everything that's going on around you. Do you have a suitable sitting area next to the pond? If not, that could be a great winter project! With all the do-it-yourself materials available now for taking on this kind of improvement, you can build a gravel and paver, stone or wooden patio/deck yourself! Are you sitting in the sun? How about a patio cover to offer some shade when sitting outside in the heat, or a fan or water misting system to make pond side relaxing and more comfortable? How about a table so you could eat your

breakfast or dinner out by the pond? If you have plants in your pond, are they well kept and trimmed? Would you like some different varieties or colors next year? How's the landscaping around the pond?

Is your water as clear as possible so you can see your beautiful fish? Do you have a population overload? If so, maybe its time to give away some of your less desirable fish to someone starting a pond, and thereby provide more space for your favorites. Remember, they're getting bigger every year.

#2) *Routine Maintenance*: when I ask people what they like and dislike about their ponds, the number one dislike is cleaning the pond and filter. Many ponds and filters are not easy to clean, and don't get cleaned as often as they should! Consider the kind of ponds with rocks on the bottom—they need to be disassembled and power washed each year to clean out all the crud that has accumulated between the rocks! It would be better to get rid of the rocks, put in a retro bottom drain to keep the pond floor clean, and never have to disassemble the pond again! Similarly, there are filters that must be taken apart to squeeze out the filter pads, there are better types of filters that are easy to clean. It's been my observation that if pond equipment is not easy to take care of, then it doesn't get cleaned. So take it upon yourself to learn about some better equipment, and lighten your maintenance load.

Part of routine maintenance is weekly water changes. Draining out 10% of your pond water and refilling with dechlorinated new water refreshes your pond and keeps your water looking great! Foam around the waterfall and tea colored water are signs of old tired water, which may contain toxins and be

See Taking Stock, continued on Page 3

October Meeting
Tuesday, October 9, 2007
7:00 PM

Steve Moeller
How To Winterize Your Pond

Dallas Water Utilities
Building, 8915 Adlora Lane,
Dallas, TX. Mapsco 27T



Water Works

Water Works is published monthly by the North Texas Water Garden Society.

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The North Texas Water Garden Society is a non-profit organization with the following objectives: To encourage a greater appreciation of and interest in water gardens; to disseminate information of interest and help to the members; and to stimulate the study and culture of aquatic plants, fish and ponds.

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Contributions to Water Works are always welcome and may be submitted to the editor by mail, fax or email. Letters to the Editor will be printed as space permits. NTWGS accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the contents of this newsletter. Reproduction is permitted provided that this newsletter and the original source are credited.

The Water Garden's Tip of the Week

Do you have trouble with fish rooting around in the soil of the potted plants in your pond? Fish, especially koi, will root in the soil and make a mess as well as uproot some plants. If you have had this occur, try placing potato-sized cobblestones on top of the gravel or aquatic potting media to discourage this behavior.

President's Pad

Last month, I told you a little about my plan to hire a Bobcat operator to finish digging my pond. I had several chores to do before I was ready for him to start digging. I have worked on these chores and have finally finished them.

The first thing that I needed to do was move my fish tank out of harms way. Since my plan entails the use of my entire backyard, the only place that I have for storage is my patio. The fish tank was drained and moved to the patio where it was then filled with water. I then added the fish, plants and snails.

The second chore that I needed to do was to remove the flagstone walkway that extends from my patio to the back gate. This normally would not take too long but it involved an excessive amount of digging. After months of kids playing on my neat dirt pile, (kids cannot resist a huge pile of dirt), the pile gradually flattened out and slowly covered a large portion of the walkway. This was so gradual that I hardly noticed the walkway becoming narrow. Each piece of flagstone was uncovered, dug up, moved and stacked on my patio.

The third chore that I needed to do was move a couple of tons of boulders that I had spread out along the outer edge of the pond. Each boulder was lifted, wheeled to the patio and stacked in a pile.

Of course, the completion of all these chores did not come without a price, such as pinched skin, mashed fingers and sore muscles. It was also very hot and I lost a lot of sweat. These were not the only unpleasant sensations that I felt. There is nothing like lifting a boulder and suddenly realizing that fire ants are stinging your feet and ankles.

In addition to the grill, chimenea and BBQ pit, I now have the boulders, flagstone, fish tank and plant pots all on my patio. It is very crowded and not a pleasant place to be. Although I will not be eating any BBQ soon, I know it will all be worth it in the end.

Joe Copeland
President,
North Texas Water Garden Society

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Taking Stock, continued from Page 1

harmful to your fish. Establish a weekly regimen of water changes and your pond will benefit immensely.

#3) *How's my knowledge of water quality and fish health?* This is an area of improvement for "Newbies" and "Oldies" alike! Every pond owner should be able to run a complete water analysis to determine when things are going right, and when they're not. Similarly, observing your fish and recognizing normal behavior is as important as realizing when fish are acting abnormally. There are lots of resources on the Internet to learn new things about your pond and its inhabitants.

Taking stock of your ponding activities is a good thing to do each year. It moves you and your ponding experience forward, and makes each year more enjoyable.

Best wishes to your fishes.



Seasonal Butterfly House

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Feng Shui for Water Gardens

Peter May

You may remember a time when there was no water in your garden and it seemed that there was something missing. Now you have a water feature and the whole garden seems to breathe with hidden life. You may have just inadvertently introduced some good Feng Shui and the cosmic goodness of chi is flowing through your garden as well as water.

What's it all about?

To the Chinese and Japanese, water is as essential to the garden scene as any other element such as stone, plants and even the sunlight and air. The garden to the Japanese works in concert with the architecture for the dwelling within the garden. The Chinese traditionally mirror the natural features surrounding the environment. But what is essential to both is that the individual elements should be in a balance that creates harmony. In the ancient Taoist philosophy of Feng Shui (pronounced 'phong shway') developed 5000 years ago, throughout the world even down to your personal living space there are Yin and Yang energies. Yin is cool and lifeless, Yang is hot and bright and full of life. You cannot have one without the other. Everywhere they are in constant flux, but close to home we want to harmonize these as much as possible. If we can do this it, invites into our homes the cosmic breath of life which is chi. If we have good chi moving slowly through our homes then we will experience calmness, serenity and the good fortune that affects the whole tenor of our existence. Since our gardens are very much a part of our homes, then it follows, especially when we intend to relax and unwind in our gardens, that Feng Shui is just as important out there.

A practical philosophy

For many of us on a casual acquaintance with the subject, Feng Shui seems steeped in esoteric rules that may make us chuckle in the way particular importance is given to the smallest detail. However much of it seems to be common sense and very easy to understand. In China Feng Shui experts or geomancers, called xiansheng, will examine a dwelling if the owners have problems with their lives or business and also assess the sites for new buildings for optimum harmony with the natural environment. They will consider four factors: The Chi or 'breath of life' potential of the locality; the shape

of the site and the building's orientation within the site and landscape; the five elements—fire, water, wood, metal, earth—and their combined effect on the site; also the power of water and its significance in relation to the particular property.

Importance of water in the garden

Feng Shui means Wind and Water. You can hear the sound of their movement in the words, and it is this movement that you must try to contain or harness within the garden, both being unfathomable elements that cannot be held. So water, perhaps in a pond or even just a fountain feature and the soothing sound of moving water is essential in a garden.

While there seems to be a consensus in regards to things like the shape of the plot overall—this should not be triangular because this attracts sha (the opposite to chi) and the forces of evil, also footpaths that should be gently curving to slow down the flow of chi—there are three schools of thought in regards to bodies of water. It is considered by many that there is significance in where you locate the water for the most positive effect it will have on different aspects of your life. One thought is that it should always be in the front or north part of the property.

Thirdly, some think that any water in the garden is beneficial, no matter where it is, as long as it is free flowing. Stagnant still water attracts sha, even water butts need to be regularly emptied, but if you do have a still pond, then rest assured that waterlilies and goldfish are good chi enhancers.

Lilian Too is probably the most prolific writer on the subject with a bookshelf full of volumes to her credit including **The Complete Illustrated Guide to Feng Shui for the Garden**. She scatters practical gems of ancient knowledge through all her books that add up to the conclusion that a well placed and tended water garden will unavoidably enhance and improve life to an unimaginable degree.

Getting it done

There are many good landscape contractors who, given a good design and directed to a source of materials, can make a pretty acceptable job of Feng Shui in action, although part of the

See Feng Shui, continued on Page 4

Feng Shui, continued from page 1

method of creating it is to do it in the right frame of mind.

If you want a garden designed for you then you need your own 'necromancer,' in other words a garden designer with experience in this field, that can oversee the project, building in the finer details and ensuring they have their place.

Too's Top Tips in the Water Gardens

- * Too thinks water gardens have greatest influence on the flow of chi when placed in the north. A mini water fountain in the north or southeast corner will bring much luck with money.
- * Water features in the front of the house affect the stability of your marriage. The lady of the house should ensure it is to the left as you look out from the house. If it is on the right then her husband will have a wandering eye. Over ambition should be avoided at all costs in having it on both sides. This can only end in tears.
- * If you are tempted to have an indoor water feature, perhaps in the entrance of the house or the hallway, make sure it seems to be flowing into the house rather than out.
- * STREAMS or even rivers. Effortless prosperity will come to those who have water meandering slowly in the direction of their home. If the water moves too fast then that good fortune does not stay long enough to have any effect.
- * WATERFALLS. If you can see a waterfall from your home and the water seems to be flowing towards the house then you cannot help becoming very rich. If there is too much water though it can drown you, so don't go over the top.
- * FISH. Fish are always good luck. If you have them indoors your career prospects will blossom. Guppies will do. If you want to keep goldfish in the aquarium, nine is optimum. Eight golds and one black. If any go 'belly-up' and expire, then just replace them.
- * FROGS. There is a popular three-legged frog which, if he is kept in the living room, will magnify your wealth. Make sure he is not facing out away from the house if he is on the doorstep.
- * If you thought that there is a certain amount of practical psychology at work here and if you are one for thinking that the state of the garden is indicative of the owner's state of mind, try trimming your plants at least once every three weeks. Overgrown plants that look straggly and uncontrolled are not good

Feng Shui. Always make sure that your trees do not overwhelm your home.' Lillian Too: **The Little Book of Feng Shui**. (Element Books).

* What seems to be on a purely practical level; we are warned to be wary of prickly plants and to keep them away from our front doors.

Water Gardener, July, 2000

Dusk to Dawn

Claire Henley

For many years waterlily flowers have only been in the colors of red, yellow, pink or white, with the changeable waterlilies listed as a separate color. Now, through work being done in North America, we have a new color range in our waterlily flowers. First are the apricot/peach varieties; in actuality they are yellow waterlilies with a wash of pink over the flowers, but the effect is outstanding in the pond. N. 'Barbara Dobbins' was one of the first of these introduced by Dr. Kirk Strawn of Texas. This was an outstanding waterlily being produced from a yellow with all the characteristics of the parent plant, but with pink at the base of the petals radiating up through the tips. Another major difference was that each flower stands erect from the water with a height of up to 9 inches once established.

Perry Slocum was also working on the yellows at this time and produced N. 'Carolina Sunset,' a lovely apricot colored waterlily with extremely large cup shaped flowers. Soon followed N. 'Florida Sunset,' a smaller version with flowers emerging out of the water by up to 8 inches with pale apricot flowers and finally N. 'Peaches and Cream,' a large waterlily with pale yellow flowers with a rich pink base to the petals. But Perry's work was more involved with getting black into the flowers. His first attempt was N. 'Perry's Black Opal,' a narrow petalled dark red with a wash of extremely dark red over the paler color. This work then went on and matured into N. 'Perry's Darkest Red,' a lovely cup-shaped red waterlily; so dark that it is actually not that noticeable on the water surface, it is only one of two very dark reds available. Perry then took a step backwards and created N. 'Perry's Almost Black.' The name implies that is the blackest possible flower in the waterlily world, but in actuality the flower is a matte dark red, not black at all. Although I have heard that it is the

darkest red that Perry could produce in South Carolina without the flower being physically cooked in the heat of the sun by midday on the first day of opening.

Perry then went on to produce his finest work in N. 'Black Princess.' An extremely large waterlily with large cup-shaped flowers of deep bright red petals tipped with black, it is absolutely stunning, but needs plenty of space in which to grow, so not one that you can put on your list if you have a small garden pond.

While Perry was busy working on his dark red waterlilies, Dr. Kirk Strawn was also busy but working on improving his peach-colored varieties. He next introduced N. 'Colorado,' supposedly his best peach. It is a lovely strong growing waterlily with deep pink/yellow flowers that also stand erect off the water surface. Then came N. 'Sunny Pink,' a creamy yellow flower with pink at the base of the petals, N. 'Thomas O'Brien' and the largest of all, N. 'Pink Grapefruit.' But probably the best and also the most popular of these peach colored waterlilies is N. 'Patio Joe.' It is not a small waterlily in growth, but it has a mass of rich pink flowers washed with yellow, which from the side view looks very peachy in color.

This is not the end of the new color introductions in the waterlily world; there is now a new range of waterlilies which extend into the cerise color range. N. 'Mayla,' by Kirk Strawn was one of the first of these, but he has also introduced more. One is called N. 'Yuh Ling' and another is called N. 'Celebration.' N. 'Mayla' is a large very star-shaped flower which is very showy, N. 'Yuh Ling' is much smaller and more suited for a smaller garden pond while N. 'Celebration' has a more cup-shaped flower and is suitable for a slightly larger pool than N. 'Yuh Ling.'

Perry Slocum has also introduced many in this color range including N. 'Perry's Fire Opal,' a large cup-shaped flower on a medium growing plant. N. 'Perry's Magnificent,' a star-shaped flower, is again a medium growing waterlily. N. 'Perry's Rich Rose,' N. 'Perry's vivid Rose,' N. 'Perry's Super Rose,' N. 'Perry's Wildfire' and the only true waterlily that crosses the border between pink and red, N. 'Wow.'

So as you can see, the range in shades is growing and before long we should be

See Dusk, continued on Page 5

Dusk, continued from Page 4

seeing many more waterlilies which cross the boundaries of color, which, of course, is getting us ever closer to the elusive blue hardy waterlily that everyone seems to be trying to obtain.

Water Gardener, July, 2000

My Pond Looks Disgusting!

By Carolyn Weise, Ecological Laboratories, Inc.

That's what I hear from people all day long—these are people who cannot stand to see any algae in their ponds—any algae. Granted, one or two really have a bad case of algae that needs to be treated with an algacide. The rest may just have nothing left to clean in the house, so they are now trying to get the pond in order. At the first sign of "GREEN" in the pond, how do you react?

I call it Algae-phobia. It might even be a bona fide psychological disease, if we can get the insurance companies to pay for treatment. Even better, if the insurance company would treat the pond, all would be well, right? Can we bill Algae-Fix to the Insurance Company? Not necessarily.

This is the height of the summer season, no matter where you live. When facing a heat wave algae attack, it is important to realize that by killing a LOT of algae AT ONE TIME, you can render the pond oxygen deprived. First, you are removing an integral (even if GREEN) part of your system by killing the algae. It has been producing oxygen during sunny days and consuming carbon dioxide, both of which are beneficial to the fish. Then, at night, like any other plant, they take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. But the pond is "used to" this routine by now. Then, after using the algacide, the breakdown of these dead "plants" will consume a considerable amount of oxygen. You are not just losing a source of oxygen production (when the sun is shining) but you are now using more in the process. So, when you use an algacide and the label says to add more aeration, it doesn't pre-suppose that the waterfall or fountain is going to be sufficient. You need to actually increase the amount of oxygen going into the pond.

A couple of other hints at fighting

algae: do water changes. Whenever people have been doing the recommended 25% weekly water changes, they tell me how much of an improvement it's made in managing the unwanted growth. Next, if you hand-pull as much of the string algae before using an algacide it makes the dead algae removal much easier. If the dead algae is allowed to lay in the bottom of the pond until it decomposes naturally, it will surely become a food source for the next algae bloom. And lastly, adding beneficial bacteria after killing the algae is important in removing the rest and balancing the nutrients (organic waste load).

Reflections, September, 2007

Frogs in the Pond

There are several types of frogs that may inhabit our ponds. Some frogs, being aquatic, will live a large portion of their lives in the pond while others will live nearby using the pond for breeding and for the food that it offers. Toads will also take up residence near a pond for the same reasons. Frogs and toads eat a lot of insects including mosquitos. Their offspring, tadpoles, will also nibble on algae in the pond.

In our last newsletter we asked for comments from you, our readers, on getting rid of frogs from your ponds. We are not advocating this but for some reason, usually the loud sound that most frogs make, some ponders don't want frogs in their ponds. About half of the mail that we received provided information on how to get rid of frogs and the other half was on how to get and keep frogs. The most common method for getting rid of frogs involved getting a cat or small dog. These pets will eat frogs and may solve your problem if ridding your pond of frogs is the goal. We hope that you will use other methods so that you do not have to destroy the frogs. We would suggest that you minimize the areas that a frog would like, such as pots just under the surface of the water and dense foliage in a shady location. Also try to cut down on hiding places such as loose stones etc. We would also suggest that you catch and remove the frogs from the pond if you can not tolerate them. With a helper, try catching the frogs at night using a flashlight and long-handled net. After you catch the frogs give them to someone with a pond who wants them or take them to a wetland where they would have a chance

for survival. Another method of keeping frogs out of your pond is to use leaf netting over the pond.

If you are trying to encourage frogs to inhabit your pond then you should provide some shady places for them to sit. They like still water and lots of plants for cover. They will also need an area in or around the pond where they can dig in for the winter.

Some types of frogs breed only in the spring while others breed several times throughout the year. There are nocturnal frogs that only come out at night and are rarely seen, and others that can be seen throughout the day. Most frogs will be welcomed in the backyard pond but bullfrogs can be a problem especially in smaller ponds. Bullfrogs will eat just about anything that they can catch including other frogs, fish, insects, mice, birds and snakes.

Water Garden News, September, 2000

Water Garden Tip

As the days get cooler and shorter, aquatic plants will begin their descent into winter dormancy. This lack of surface coverage can mean a greater risk of predators attacking fish. Leaf netting put down for the fall can be kept over the pond surface throughout the winter to help protect the fish. We can also provide a hiding spot with a Koi Kastle or otherwise creating an underwater "cave."

www.watergarden.com

NTWGS Programs

By David Gould

Our October speaker will be Steve Moeller of Water Gardens Galore.

He will talk to us about *How to Winterize Our Ponds*.

There have been many articles written about this process but usually they are for regions with winters very different from our weather here in North Texas. He will give us specific pointers about plants, fish and the tasks we need to do to prepare our ponds for winter. Follow these steps and you increase the odds of your pond and inhabitants surviving the cold season and rebounding better in the spring. We will have a question and answer period after his talk, so bring your questions.

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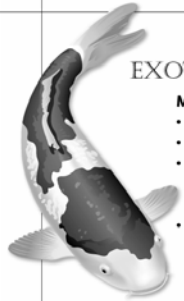
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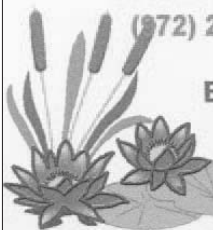
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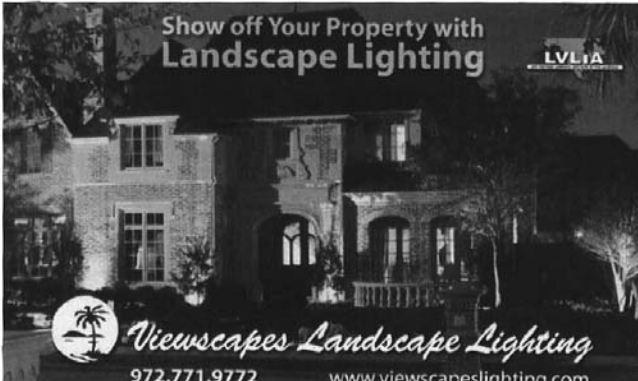
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Leopard Tortoise

Leopard tortoises are the fourth largest tortoises in the world and the second largest on Mainland Africa. They can reach carapace sizes of over two feet in length and weigh over 100 pounds. Most specimens usually only reach carapace lengths of 15 to 18 inches and weigh 30 to 50 pounds.

Male leopard tortoises are sometimes larger than females. If kept in an outdoor pen then normal grasses can be used in the pen. Leopard tortoises require a high fiber diet and should consist of 70% to 75% of grasses and hay. Use a variety of hays (timothy, alfalfa, orchard grass, etc.) to provide variety. Large amounts of lettuces and fruits should not be provided, though occasional small amounts are OK. The fruit and pads of the prickly pear (*Opuntia* sp.) are also enjoyed. Meat and other high protein items should be avoided as they lead to long-term health issues. Calcium and vitamin D3 supplements should be provided on a regular basis (two to three times per week depending on the diet being fed).

Clear Water Times, September, 2007

Happy Halloween



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BECKETT CORPORATION

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Membership

Notice, if you are not receiving an email announcement of meetings and news events, then I do not have, or your current email address in our database is wrong.

If you would like to be included in this form of communication please send me your email address.

Kevin Fuess, Membership Chair,
jmcinc@xspedius.net

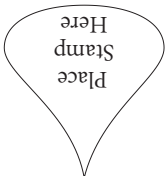
**October, 2007
 Calendar of Events**

- 10/2 NTWGS Board Meeting
- 10/9 NTWGS Meeting
- 10/11 Columbus Day
- 10/11 Canadian Thanksgiving
- 10/16 National Boss Day
- 10/11 Patriot Day
- 10/24 United Nations Day
- 10/31 Halloween



**NTWGS Voice Mail Number
 972-994-1140**

**REMINDER!
 Meeting September 11**



**North Texas Water
 Garden Society
 Post Office Box 9127
 Dallas, Texas 75209-9127**

