

KANSAS POND SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

December 2014



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**Saturday,
December 6
6:00 PM - ?**

**at the
Kiwanis Park Building
5101 W. 2nd**

(From West Street, go west on 2nd
Street 8 or 9 blocks.)

This will be our holiday party. We will have our Dirty Santa gift exchange. See my column to the right for details. Bring a dish or dessert. Turkey and ham will be provided as will drinks. Come join us for this festive event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Nov 1 KPS Meeting – Elections/
Auction*
*Nov 1-2: KS Orchid Society
show & sale, Botanica*
*Nov 28- Dec 31(except Dec 24 &
25): Illuminations at
Botanica*
Dec 6: KPS Holiday Party
Jan 10: KPS Meeting at Botanica
Feb 7: KPS Meeting at Botanica

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Terry Powell
David & Angela Gaffney

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Mike Kandt

Our November meeting/auction in Botanica's new Lotus Hall was terrific. We had a good crowd that included a number of people from other garden clubs in town. We also had guests from afar. Mike and Kathy Hopple (Mike is a KPS past-president) were in town from Charleston, SC, and enjoyed seeing old friends.

In our elections, Wanita Wright was elected vice-president and Susan Kandt retained her office of secretary. The auction was very successful and we raised over \$1,000 for Botanica. Thanks to Deborah Gafvert for organizing this event and to the Wichita Area Garden Council for helping make it a success. Everyone had a great time.

The club also voted to approve the proposal to buy a ceramic plaque in the name of the club at the entrance to the new Chinese Garden at Botanica in the amount of \$500. This garden is under construction, but the hardscapes should be complete before the end of the year. The grand opening will be in the spring of 2015.

Our Holiday Party will be Saturday, **December 6**, 2014, at 6 pm. We'll return to Kiwanis Park, located at 5101 W 2nd Street. You can take Kellogg to West Street and go north and take a left onto 2nd St. Or from I-235, get off at Central, go east and turn right on Doris or Clara. Those streets stop right in front of the park. Meat is provided by the club. We will have turkey and ham, so bring side dishes and desserts. If you want to partake in the Dirty Santa gift exchange, bring a gift. As always, let's try to keep the gifts in the \$25.00 range. Rules are simple. If you bring a gift, you get to pick a gift or steal someone else's, but once a gift is stolen twice it can't be stolen anymore, and that person is the proud owner. Hope to see you there for the fun. Ho Ho Ho!!!

Also, be sure to come see Botanica in its Holiday glory. Illuminations is always a wintertime treat.

Mike



SWAP SHOP

If you have articles, plants or fish to sell or give away, let me know at 838-6681 or koikat@cox.net

PETS FOR SALE: Angelfish \$2.00 each, Guinea Pigs \$10.00 each, Parakeets \$10.00 each. Call John Byers - 838-5576, 838-4333

ADVERTISING RATES

Business Card Size Ad (about 2" x 3 1/2"): \$15 per 3-month period; \$50 per year

Quarter-Page Ad (about 3 1/2" x 4 1/2"): \$30 per 3-month period; \$100 per year

Half-Page Ad (about 5" x 7 1/2"): \$60 per 3-month period; \$200 per year

Full-Page Ad (8 1/2" x 11"): \$400 per year

BOG PLANTS

By Duane Van Dolah

(Duane could not write this month's column, so we dug back into the past for a reprise on a plant article. Hope he's back next month.)

VIOLET

Viola

The violets have a group of species that can adapt to seasonal wet flooding. Out of 500 species there are a few that can grow around the pond. These plants all care more for the semi-shade in zones 4-7. Most have growth 4-6 inches tall and wide in wet to damp soil. Foliage and flower color give its species its distinction. Propagation is by division and seed. Viola cornuta, horned violet, is a native of the Pyrenees Mountains of Spain. This species grows 12 inches high, with small green leaves covered in large, long-lived violet-shaped flowers of white, lilacblue, and deep blue. Viola cucullata looks like a common blue violet and grows great in a wet shady bank or seasonally flooded woods. It can tolerate water over the crown for three to five days. Viola labradorica is from the far north of Canada, Greenland, and North America. It grows 1 1/2 to 3 inches tall and has small violet flowers in white with violet-veined bases coming from a mound of heart-shaped leaves. A cultivar, `Purpurea`, is a good plant to look for. It forms a groundcover of dark-green to purple leaves with light purple flowers. Viola lanceolata is the best violet for water. Flowers are white with pale blue faces and darker stamens. Viola macloskeyi is very adaptable and heat tolerant. The flowers are a very pale blue. Viola nephrophylla is similar to Viola lanceolata but is two-thirds the size and a darker color of flower with a good tolerance of high pH in the water and soil. Viola palustris is the least heat tolerant of the violets listed here. It does not do well south of zone 6. It again is similar to Viola lanceolata, but the foliage is wider and the flowers a little bluer.

Some information was taken from Greg & Sue Speichert's Encyclopedia of Water Garden Plants. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, Inc., 2004, p. 282-283.

Duane



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TIP OF THE MONTH
HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR THE POND PERSON
By Mike Kandt

Ho! Ho! Ho! Sometimes it can be difficult to select a gift for your favorite pond person/gardener. Usually, this is their hobby and they can be particular about items or features that they add to the pond and garden. So for some inspiration, I have pulled out the old list I come up with every year in hopes that something that they were not ready for last year might be just the ticket this year. Good luck, you Ponder Santas!!

- A promise for a new hardy/tropical water lily in the spring
- Tickets to Botanica's Illuminations
- A new water gardening or fish-keeping book
- Fancy fish food (okay, this is really for the fish)
- A nice ceramic pot that they wouldn't buy for themselves
- A new fish net (I like the bottomless koi sock – at least 11” in size and the koi handling net – very shallow and 24” in diameter.)
- Water-proof gloves for dividing mucky water plants
- Maybe a new water lily or lotus (plan for spring delivery)
- One of those big pond aerators
- A new pair of insulated waders
- An algae twirler (to remove string algae)
- A water quality test kit
- Pond thermometer – maybe one of the wireless remote types
- Pond and garden lighting
- A floating planter for the pond
- Bird bath heater (for birds that have been depending on the waterfall that is now netted or shut off)
- A soil test kit or water test kit
- Pond netting (for next year)
- A compost thermometer
- Gift membership to Botanica or the Kansas Pond Society
- Fragrant wood for chiminea or a firepit
- His or her very own pruners with holster and belt
- A greenhouse kit (if you really want to stimulate the economy)
- A beautiful moss-covered boulder or maybe a gift certificate to a rock store
- Gift certificate to a garden center (buy locally)
- Garden ornaments, wind chimes, sculptures or a spitter
- Pumps for the spitter and bird bath
- A new pond filter or skimmer
- New shovel (for digging that new pond)
- Lawn furniture (to sit and admire the pond after it's dug)
- Wet/dry vacuum (no pond keeper should be without one) or maybe a pond vacuum
- Backup or utility pump with a good, long discharge hose
- Plant tags to keep track of your plant names
- Fancy watering can that looks cool sitting on the porch or potting bench
- Pond clay (calcium montmorillonite) – helps to clear the filtered water



Check out your local garden centers first and keep our cash in the community. But if you just can't find that special item, hit the internet and have a happy holiday. Ho Ho Ho!

Mike

CHRISTMAS PLANTS

By Duane Van Dolah

POINSETTIA

Euphorbia pulcherrime

The symbol of Christmas indoors is the Poinsettia. This was not always so. In the early 1960's, it was a tall-growing shrub which was distinctly difficult to keep in leaf and flower in the average home. Things have changed. Modern varieties are bushier, more attractive and much less delicate. In addition, modern chemicals are used to keep the plants small.



The result is that the Poinsettia of today is compact (1-1 ½ feet tall) and the flowers (which are really colored bracts) should last 2-4 months. When buying a plant look at the true flower (yellow and tiny in the center of the flower head). They should be unopened for maximum flower life.

Indoors, the plant needs average warmth of 55-60 degrees minimum, maximum light during the winter and protect it from hot summer sun if the plant is to be kept for next year. Water thoroughly when the soil is moderately dry. Water immediately if the leaves begin to wilt. Water more liberally in the summer. Poinsettia like high humidity so mist the leaves frequently during the flowering season.

If you would like to try for blooms next year, when the leaves have fallen, cut back the stems to leave stumps 4-inches tall. The soil should be kept almost dry and the pot placed in a mild, shady place. In early May, water and repot the plant removing some of the old soil. Continue watering and new shoots will soon appear. Feed regularly and remove some of the new growth to leave 4-5 strong new stems. The stems that you cut can be used as stem cuttings to make the plant fuller.

From the end of September, careful light control is essential. Cover the plant with a black polyethylene bag from early evening and remove the next morning so that the plant is kept in total darkness for 14 hours. Continue daily for 8 weeks, then treat the plant normally. Your Poinsettia should again be in bloom for Christmas time but should be taller than last year.



Nov 28 - Dec 31

Illuminations

1 Million Lights ★ You've Got To See It To Believe It!

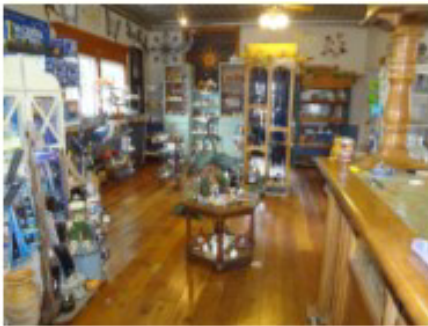
Best Holiday Destination in Kansas

ILLUMINATIONS

ILLUMINATIONS 2014 will be held seven days a week, 5:30-8:30 p.m. from November 28 through Dec. 31 (excluding Dec.24 and 25).

Illuminations is a family-friendly event that showcases Botanica's 17 acres of beautiful gardens in a completely different light. It has become one of the area's premier holiday events, but this year the event is getting a festive facelift! With hundreds of thousands of lights and new themed displays, Illuminations will be Kansas' largest holiday light display. More than 5,000 LED luminaries will line garden pathways, more than 120 trees will be expertly lit, and many structures will be lit with twinkling white lights. As visitors enjoy their walk through the Gardens, they will enjoy the warm glow of luminaries, the sound of electric trains traveling around pine trees, the reflections of trees on the pond, the magic of the flocked forest at Candy Cane Lane, the fragrance of chimineas, the warmth of hot cocoa and cider and the joy of live musical groups. In total, hundreds of thousands of lights combine with nature to create a stunning atmosphere and a "HO, HO, HO" lot of holiday fun! Support from special events such as Illuminations help us showcase the Gardens, maintain Botanica as one of the Midwest's leading botanical gardens and further our mission.

Tickets are \$8 (\$7 members) for adults and \$6 for youth (3-12). Advance tickets can be purchased at all area QuikTrip locations or at Botanica. Members must purchase their tickets at Botanica in order to receive their discount. Member Appreciation Night is Dec. 1 and all member tickets are \$6. Group rates are available in advance. For ticket information please call Kathy Osler at 316-264-0448 ext. 111. Please bring your printed receipt for admission to Illuminations.



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We will have all our regular supplies with many new and seasonal items. Visit us on our website:

www.swanswatergardens.com



IT'S (brrrr!) WINTER IN THE TWITTER UNIVERSE!

And no, I don't mean that thing you do with your phone. I'm talking the ORIGINAL twitter universe here.

So okay. You've winterized your pond; you've brought in all your tropical plants and given them a warm, cozy place in the house; you've blown out your sprinkler system; and you've schlepped in all your hoses, hose carts, and sprinkler attachments. So let the snow fly, right? You're ready for winter!

Well not so fast, cowboy. Haven't you forgotten something? You know...those beautiful creatures that gift you with song all summer? Long about now they could use your help.

I don't necessarily make a habit of feeding the birds all summer. Where we live, they have plenty of bugs, berries, worms, etc. to feed on. I do make sure they have birdbaths, however. What with drought seemingly our new way of life during Kansas summers, it's more important to provide birds with a clean, safe water source than it is even to provide them with food.

But once it gets to be winter, our feathered friends can use all the food you're willing to part with.

Sometime during last night, while we humans were snug in our warm beds, snow fell here in Doo Dah. We woke up to a beautiful winter wonderland and temperatures in the low 20's. And I was feeling pretty smug that we'd done all our winterizing – especially when I looked out the windows and saw birds mobbing the feeders I'd had the foresight to fill the other day.

What I also realized was that I'd not thought ahead and moved my birdbath to the right spot. I'd moved it to a location where I could plug the heater into an extension cord and stretch it to the outdoor electrical outlet. But I hadn't remembered to move it to the RIGHT location. (More on that later.)

I think helping the birds get through a hard winter is one of my greatest winter joys (right next to taking a break from yardwork and cozying up to a warm fire). I can blow an entire day sitting by the glass doors with my binoculars, just watching the cardinals, bluejays, titmice, wrens, sparrows, juncos, chickadees, and woodpeckers coming and going in my Secret Garden.



I long ago quit putting out suet, because I spend more time wrestling those messy cakes into the holders than the suet actually lasts once the starlings hit town. (And I've learned that it's the suet that seems to attract starlings and grackles more than the seed does.) I've gone strictly to mixing a blend of peanuts and black oil sunflower seeds. I've discovered that everybody, from squirrels to woodpeckers, are happy with this blend (hey, squirrels gotta eat, too – and believe me, they're going to eat whatever you put out there so you may as well learn how to live with them.)

I buy sunflower seed by the 50-pound bag. If possible, I try to buy seed that's been grown locally. In the past, Atwoods has carried seed grown in Belle Plaine, but I never know whether that'll be available or not from year to year.

I stick entirely to the hanging birdfeeders of the wood frame and screen bottom variety, because these drain well when snow and rain fall on them and they stay cleaner. I have two large ones that the squirrels can sit in; for the birds, I hang a couple of smaller ones over which I've mounted squirrel baffles. Because the large ones don't have the baffles and are therefore more accessible, plus the fact that I keep nuts in them, the squirrels are pretty much content to use those and leave the smaller feeders alone. Ergo, win win.

Seed gets knocked out of these feeders, of course, but what falls to the ground is eagerly snapped up by the ground-feeding birds like juncos and doves. Even the woodpeckers, who prefer to have suet cakes mounted on the sides of trees so they can inch up to them, will eventually find their way to these hanging feeders.



I also keep a couple of those nail-on-a-board corn feeders on a tree for the squirrels. They need something to gnaw on, and if they have these, they tend to leave our wood fence tops alone. Instead of using the cob corn you buy in sacks for squirrels, I buy the composite stuff (it's called "Sweet Corn Squirrelogs"). Whereas a corn on the cob will literally disappear in less than a day, a composite log last for weeks – often a month or longer. They're getting harder and harder to find, but I've discovered I can reliably find them at Woodard Mercantile at Maize Rd. and 45th North. If anybody knows where else they can be found, I'd love to hear.

I also find peanuts, both in the shell or out of the shell, at Woodard. But Bill Ethridge told me recently that he and Kathy have shopped around, and they've found the cheapest place in town to buy unsalted peanuts by the pound is at Nifty Nut House. That thrills me no end, because I love shopping at our locally-owned Nifty Nut House. I can feed the birds and

squirrels and me at the same time!

I have a pretty good-sized concrete birdbath in my Secret Garden, equipped with a thermostat-controlled heater, that I position close enough to the house that I'll remember to keep it filled. Remember what I said earlier about location? Well, I've learned that birds need to have some sort of natural cover close to a birdbath if they're going to use it. I keep mine next to a red-twig dogwood shrub that's about 10 feet high. Birds will land in the shrub, check to make sure the coast is clear, then flit down to the bath. Cardinals, who live in pairs, will take turns taking a bath, while the other keeps watch from the shrub. Make sure you place your bath away from places that cats can use as launch points, such as benches, boulders, etc.

You need to keep a close eye on a heated birdbath, because if you let it go dry, the heater will burn up. I like to go out once a day and swish a stiff brush through the bath to get the crud out and then refill it with warmish water I haul from the kitchen in a watering can. Two minutes after I close the door behind me, the bath will be filled with grateful birds enjoying the steam that comes from the cold air hitting the warm water.

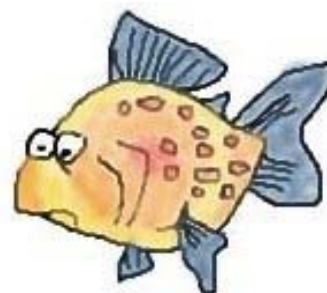
Since my winter birdbath is fairly large and deep, I put a rock or a small tree twig in it so that the smaller birds can perch and bathe without being in over their heads. The rock will also serve to anchor the cord on the heater so the heater stays under water instead of trying to float to the top.



Once you've stocked your "twitter universe", go inside, grab a cup of hot chocolate, pull a chair up to the window, and enjoy watching your feathered friends whose lives you've made a whole lot easier out there in the cold. What you've done for them will warm both them AND you!

So hats off to those of you who repeatedly trudge out into a cold winter's day, lugging buckets of food and water to fill those feeders and baths and provide homes, whether transitory or permanent, to the creatures trying to survive in our yards. As much as I love the fish in my ponds, I remind myself daily that nature has bigger expectations of me than just taking care of the animals I choose to live with. Some denizens of the wild choose ME to live with. It really is a small world out there and charity does indeed begin at home. Both inside and out.

Before I end this, I want to ask all of you to keep some KPS members in your thoughts and prayers. Duane Van Dolah, Rick Daney, Linda Williams, Kathy Ethridge, and Wanda Schneider are all battling serious health issues. In addition, a couple of former KPS members who are also my neighbors – Jim McKinney and Chuck Pickard -- are fighting their own battles. I'm sure there are others in our midst I don't know about. I hear medical science is working wonders, but I know the fight must be long and hard and must sometimes feel pretty lonely. To all I've mentioned and to those I haven't, I hope it helps to know we're all sending positive vibes in your direction.



See you at the Christmas party!

Susan



DUES ARE DUE

Dues for the Kansas Pond Society were due January 1. We do not send out invoices, so just send a check for \$20 to Larry Determann, 1508 N Mt. Carmel, Wichita, KS, 67203 with the form below. Your dues are important to cover our costs for this newsletter and other club expenses. Many members find that this cost is more than redeemed through the year. If we don't receive your renewal before the March meeting, we must take your name off our mailing list. So send in your dues as soon as you can.

KANSAS POND SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Renewal for one year (January thru December) \$20.00

Name or Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-Mail: _____

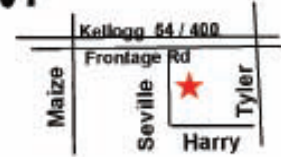
Please indicate how you would like to receive the newsletter: Web-site? Mail?

Detach or print out and send with your renewal check to Larry Determann, 1508 N. Mt. Carmel, Wichita, KS 67203



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