

KANSAS POND SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

September 2009

President: Terry Bennett 648-4066, mrfootbag69@yahoo.com
 Vice-President: Jeff Hoffman 744-1899, jeff85uk@yahoo.com
 Treasurer: Larry Determann 945-0017, ksscouter@cox.net
 Secretary: Susan Kandt 838-6681, koikat@cox.net
 Newsletter Editor: Mike Kandt 838-6681, koikat@cox.net
 Website: www.kansaspondsociety.org



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Terry Bennett

Hello, Ponders. Summer is quickly coming to an end. The kids are back in school and the weather can't decide what to do. It won't be long before the trees start shedding their leaves. It seems shorter and shorter each year that we get to enjoy our ponds at their zenith. It won't be long till Myra starts telling me that I need to start bringing in all those tropical plants I so love. And I, of course, will procrastinate once again this year, not willing to put up those gorgeous plants until a freeze is just hours away. And, of course, I will again this year get to hear those famous words: "I told you to do that two weeks ago when you didn't have to hurry." Oh, well. I don't want to disappoint her. Besides, I don't want Mr. Webster to take my picture out of the dictionary under the word procrastinate. I haven't actually seen it there, but Myra assures me it's there. Never know what Mother Nature is going to do next, but I hope she gives me 30 to 45 more days before I have to do my annual rush job and hear the inevitable "I told you so."

Well, we certainly had great weather for our August KPS meeting at the Kandts. The rains again parted around Wichita to allow us to hold our meeting. I sometimes think Mother Nature must really like our pond club to always give us such great weather on the first Saturday of each month all summer. And as expected, we had a huge turnout. It seems we always have a large group show up when we meet at the residence of Mike and Susan Kandt. Is it because their property is always immaculate, or maybe it's because there are trees, flowers, and plants everywhere. Maybe it's the draw of four totally different kinds of ponds, or the fact their property backs up to the river. In my opinion, it's all of the above mixed with the Kandts' hospitality. Mike was also our featured speaker. He talked about miniature water lilies and tropical lilies, as well. Mike also did a demonstration on how to build and take care of container water gardens. He also reminded us to use mosquito dunks to keep the mosquitoes under control and also reminded us to drain container gardens in the winter to keep the water from freezing and breaking our favorite pots. If you didn't make it to the meeting, Scenic Landscape has quite a few container gardens around their grounds for viewing. Besides showing how to build container gardens, Mike also gave away some plants as door prizes to put in your own pond or container water garden. And it goes without saying, the food was awesome.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sep 5* **KPS Mtg - Gafvert/Flemings'**
- Oct 3* **KPS Meeting- Auction**
- Nov 7* **KPS Meeting- Elections**
- Dec 5* **KPS Holiday Party**
- Dec 4-6* *Illuminations at Botanica*
- Dec 8-13* *Illuminations at Botanica*
- Jan 2* **KPS Meeting**
- Feb 6* **KPS Meeting**
- Mar 3-7* **Wichita Garden Show**
- Mar 27* **KPS Mtg - Lily Divide**
- May 1* **KPS Mtg - Plant Exchange**

September Meeting

Saturday Sept. 5

6:00 PM - ?

At the home of

Deborah Gafvert & Clyde Fleming

9 Sandpiper

(East from 143rd on Central; South on Stagecoach; east on Sandalwood to Sandpiper)

We'll have our normally fantastic potluck buffet. Please bring a main dish and a side or dessert. Drinks, cups, paper plates and plastic forks are usually provided, but you are also welcome to bring your own plates and service. Also bring lawn chairs.

Well, if you missed our last meeting, don't fret. We have another equally great event coming Saturday, September 5th, at the home of Deborah Gafvert and Clyde Fleming at 9 Sandpiper in Andover. Kick off your Labor Day weekend with us Saturday evening around their awesome pool/converted to pond. Our featured speaker will be our own Al Volkman. Al will be talking about pond predators, especially the winged variety. If you have any pictures of cranes, egrets, or any other predators in your pond or around your property, please bring them. Al plans to talk about identification of the various birds in our area. I'm pretty sure we can get him to talk about frogs, tortoises, and turtles with very little encouragement.

Al has also touched base with Bob Gress and put together a presentation that will tie in with Bob's presentation next February. So write down your questions now so you don't forget them and have them ready for the next meeting. We will also be enjoying our famous pot luck buffet. So bring a main dish and a dessert, and of course don't forget your lawn chairs, and let's enjoy the last outdoor meeting of the year.

I also want to remind all of you who wish to participate in the planning stage of the garden show next March that plans are already under way. I think you will like the path we have taken. Want to be involved? We welcome the help. Next meeting is Sunday, 9/13/09, 1:00 p.m. at Larry Determann's house, 1508 N. Mount Carmel.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar for upcoming KPS events. The schedule is set for the next several months.

- September 5th: 6:00 p.m. at Gafvert / Fleming's, 9 Sandpiper in Andover. Featured speaker Al Volkman
- October 3rd: 6:00 p.m., Learning Center, 150 Steward in Haysville, featuring our annual auction
- November 7th: Hyde Park, 201 S Greenwood (Douglas & Hydraulic), 6:00 p.m., elections for president and treasurer (2-year terms), speaker TBA
- December 5th: Kiwanis Park, 5101 W 2nd, 6:00 p.m., Christmas party, featuring Dirty Santa gift exchange
- January 2nd: Botanica, 6:00 p.m., featured guest speaker Don Connelly from Crosstimber Koi farm in Edmond, Oklahoma
- February 6th: Botanica, 6:00 p.m., featured guest speaker Bob Gress from Great Plains Nature Center
- March 3rd -7th: KPS at the Wichita Garden Show (no meeting due to show)
- March 27th: Lily divide at Botanica (no April meeting)
- May 1st: 6:00 p.m., Kansas Natural Stone, annual plant swap

I'm excited about these upcoming events and hope to see you at all of them.

Terry Bennett

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BOG PLANTS
By Duane Van Dolah

SIBERIAN IRIS

IRIS SIBIRICA

The Siberian Iris is one of the iris family that tolerates some moist-to-wet conditions as well as dry conditions. The dark green leaves are thin and grass-like, with a height of 24 to 36 inches. The leaves come from very close-set, wiry rhizomes that form a colony of thick growth. In the water, growth can be twice as much than in dry conditions. The flowers are on straight, hollow stems. The top of the stems produces three to four flowers, and the side branches produce another two. The flowers come in shades of blue and white, as well as deep purple-reds to light lavender-pinks, plus yellows. Flowers are 2-4 inches across. Their rhizomes or roots can be covered in 2-4 inches of water when they are growing, but their pots must be removed in the fall and buried in the garden till next spring. They are sun loving and will grow in shade but with few blooms. Blooms start opening when the tall bearded iris are through with their blooming season. Some varieties rebloom in late summer and early fall. Propagation is by seed or division after blooming. There are so many cultivars that there has to be one that would strike your fancy.



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Wendy's Wisdom

By Wendy Huffman

{{Editor: I get frequent e-mails from Wendy on lots of different things. I can even reprint a few of them. Here is one I think you'll like. Wendy must be related to Heloise.}}

Zip-Lock Water Bags

We went with some friends to Sweetie Pie's on Sunday for breakfast, and we sat in the enclosed patio section beside the house. We happened to notice a couple of zip-lock baggies pinned to a post and a wall. The bags were half filled with water. Each contained four pennies, and they were zipped shut. Naturally, we were curious! Ms. Sweetie told us that these baggies kept the flies away! So naturally we were even more curious! We actually watched some flies come in the open window, stand around on the window sill, and then fly out again. And there were no flies in the eating area! This morning I checked this out on Google. Below are comments on this fly control idea. I'm now a believer!

Sue says: Many people swear that a zip-lock bag filled half-way with water and attached over entryways will repel flies. No one yet knows how or why it works, but there is speculation that it has something to do with the way the moving water refracts light.



Ann says: I tried the zip-lock bag and pennies this weekend. I have a horse trailer, and the flies were very bad while I was camping. I put the baggie with pennies above the trailer door. NOT ONE FLY came in the trailer. Not sure why it works, but it does!!!!!!

Danielle Martin says: Fill a zip-lock bag with water and five or six pennies and hang it in the problem area. In my case, it was a particular window in my home. It had a slight but significant passageway for insects. Ever since I did that, it has kept flies and wasps away. Some say that wasps and flies mistake the bag for some sort of other insect nest and are threatened by this.

Maggie says: I swear by the plastic bag of water trick. I have them on a side porch (our house entry) and all around the basement door. We saw these in Northeast Missouri at an Amish grocery store and have used them since. They say it works because a fly sees a reflection and won't come around.

Did you know



...
The metabolism of a cold-blooded animal, including fish, DOUBLES for every 18° increase in their environment. Increasing water temp. from 70° to 88° means that the requirements of fish and bio-filtration bacteria for nutrients and air double. wcv

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ALGAE CONTEST

So far we've only gotten one response, so in order to make this a contest, we need a few more. We know all of you hate stringy algae. But other than filtering pond water, there must be SOMETHING it's good for. Let's see how many ways this plant can be used once we remove the green globs from our waterfalls, streams and ponds. Prizes will be awarded for creativity (not quantity). Send your suggestions in writing to Susan Kandt, at koikat@cox.net or mail to 5615 N. Sullivan Rd., Wichita, KS, 67204. Verbal suggestions will be promptly forgotten. Judges have not yet been selected but will most certainly include some of our club's best brain power. Please submit your entry suggestions before August 30.

Just DJ says: Regarding the science behind zip-lock bags of water? My research found that each of the millions of molecules of water presents its own prism effect, and given that flies have a lot of eyes, to them it's like a zillion disco balls reflecting light, colors and movement in a dizzying manner. When you figure that flies are basically prey for many other bugs, animals, birds, etc., they simply won't take the risk of being around that much perceived action. I moved to a rural area and thought these "hillbillies" were just yanking my city boy chain but I tried it; it worked immediately! We went from hundreds of flies to seeing the occasional one, but he doesn't hang around long.

{{Editor's Note: Hopefully this will help our friends in the feedlot cities of western Kansas.}}

TIP OF THE MONTH

By Mike Kandt

FINDING A LEAK

Many of you pond veterans can skip ahead and ignore this article, but I know there are many new pond keepers who may be interested in this one.

The conversation usually begins something like this: My pond is going down six inches a day. Is that normal evaporation? The answer is NO – you have a leak!! Evaporation, even in the hottest, driest summer, should not exceed an inch per day. Usually, it is only a fraction of that. Leaks can be very aggravating and can happen to the most skilled pond builder. There are generally four places where pond leaks occur: the pond liner; 2) plumbing and piping; 3) streams; 4) waterfalls.

The pond liner leak is the easiest one to find and fix. Begin by shutting off your pump and circulation system. If the water continues to go down after a day, then you have a liner leak. Let the water continue to do down until it stops. If it gets too low, you may need to move fish to a holding tank or pool. When the water stops going down, you have found the level of the leak. Now, carefully inspect every inch of the liner, including the folds and pleats along the water line. A leak in the side is usually caused by an animal claw or a falling rock or limb. Clean the liner well of all algae and apply a patch. Sometimes a bicycle tube patch will work.

If the pond liner test passes, next test difficult to find, depending on to connect a pipe to the discharge at circulates directly back to the pond you have one). If the pond level goes have a plumbing leak. Next, examine muddy areas. If all is dry, begin to at joints or perhaps a broken pipe due leaves skimmers and enters biofall



for a plumbing leak. These can be very whether the piping is buried or not. First try the head of the waterfall so that the water and bypasses the waterfall and stream (if down with the water recirculating, then you external pumps and piping for surrounding excavate the piping, looking for glue failure to freezing. Be sure to check where piping boxes.

Most pond leaks occur in waterfalls look at these. Sometimes, heavy If the top of your stream or waterfall any settlement can cause a leak. Look for moist areas around the stream edges. Carefully remove rocks and gravel and suspect areas to inspect the liner edges. Look at the edges of the waterfall weir (where the water flows out of a head pond or pool). Sometimes a new, more powerful pump can slightly raise the water level in a head pool and cause a leak.

and streams. If the other tests pass, then rocks on loosely compacted earth can settle. liner is very close to the water level, then

Be patient and persistent. I have chased leaks for years before I found them. One alternative is to let it leak. I have a slow waterfall leak, but I also have a refill valve from the well. The fish love the fresh water.

FISH TALES

by Susan Kandt



RAMBLINGS FROM DAGOBAH

Well, once again, gentle readers, it's the Dog Days of August and...wait a minute. We really haven't HAD any actual Dog Days this August, have we? In fact, all things considered, it's been eerily pleasant for Kansas in August. Downright un-doggian, in fact. Nevertheless, this is the time of year when I traditionally subject you to my Dog Days of August Ramblings from Dagobah, and subject you I shall.

Okay, before I start rambling, a definition is apparently in order. I'm told that there are STILL people out there who don't get my 'Dagobah' reference. Sigh. People, people. I buy you books and I buy you books, and you STILL don't comprehend my obscure sci fi references? Okay, okay. Here we go again. Dagobah was the overgrown jungly swamp planet where Yoda lived. You remember Yoda. The wizened little guy who looked remarkably like a Jim Henson puppet but turned out to be the guru of the Jedi Knights? You DO remember Star Wars? Right. Well, our yard periodically gets away from us and overgrows like nobody's business, thus resembling Yoda's world. Hence, I've dubbed it Dagobah.

The monsoon season in May is one time when it especially looks like Dagobah. In May, it tends to rain and rain and rain here in this neck of the woods, and for a few weeks our poor yard turns into a primordial swamp. Then, like magic and virtually overnight, drought conditions take over, and I'm cursed with endless watering to keep the former swamp green. All through late May, June, and July, we pull weeds, water, pull weeds some more, then water again, curse the whole shootin' match, pull weeds some more, until the yard actually starts to look pretty good. We plump up with pride, put the place on tour, even invite all you lovely folks over for a KPS meeting, and THEN...well, then the dreaded menace of August hits. Once August descends upon us, I burn out royally and could care less about the yard. Weeds? Heck, who cares? Weeds gotta live, too, right? Slugs? Hey, let the hostas fend for themselves. I mean, come on. It's August. I don't DO August.

So the weeds take over, but since I do continue to water, at least the weeds are green. So the green weeds grow and grow, and it turns jungly out there again, and once more it turns into Dagobah. Now granted, we've had an insane amount of rain this year. In fact, as I write this, I have to admit I haven't needed to water in over two weeks. And the temperatures have been downright pleasant. So logically, I can't really justify suffering from my usual August burnout. But burnt out I am (I'm even starting to SOUND like Yoda), and the weeds are achieving monumental proportions, but here I sit, rambling on about....

...frogs. Yep, frogs. (See what I mean about rambling?) I've been thinking a lot about frogs lately. And worrying. And kind of obsessing, I guess. My daughter tells me I get "Monkish" about things, apparently referring to some TV show featuring a guy who reminds her disturbingly of her mother. Supposedly, this Monk dude fixates on something to the point of tuning out anything else. Okay, I can relate.

I began worrying about the frog situation a few years ago when I started reading and hearing how the frogs on this fragile planet of ours are disappearing. Some of them are even mutating. This is exceedingly disturbing to the people who study frogs for a living, and it should be exceedingly disturbing to the rest of us, too, because frogs are what scientists call the "canaries in the coal mine" when it comes to the health of planet Earth. In other words, when the frogs start to mutate and disappear, it's a strong indication that all is not well in our environment. And THAT means that we homo sapiens may just start to mutate and disappear, too.

But it's not only that (as if that weren't enough to keep even the non-Monkish types awake at night). I just feel sad about the frogs themselves. I can't imagine a world without frogs. I mean, as water gardening, pond-loving folks, can you even entertain the thought of NO frogs? None of those cute little guys sunning themselves like photo ops on your waterlilies and serenading you while you enjoy an evening sitting by your pond, maybe

dangling your feet in the cool water while the fish nibble at your toes? The thought of such a scenario without the benefit of frogs...well, it's just inconceivable to me.

But not, apparently, to everybody. Recently, we were part of a social gathering that included a couple who mentioned that they had a pond. Then they offhandedly threw in the tidbit that the only negative side of the pond was those "noisy, irritating frogs." They laughingly admitted that they catch the little buggers and throw them over the fence into the neighbor's yard to get rid of them.

AAAAAGGGGGGHHHHH! I had to get up and leave the group. (In some situations, it's glaringly apparent that enlightenment isn't an option, if you know what I mean.) And this wasn't the first time I've heard this grouching about frogs. Every time we're on the pond tour, invariably one person comes up to us and asks what they can do about the loud frogs. Seems the little pests keep them awake at night. I've been known to employ sarcasm (who, ME?) and inquire sweetly if they prefer the sound of traffic, or maybe that of the earth-vibrating, teeth-shattering rap music assaulting them from the window of the neighboring teenager's room. Frogs noisy, annoying, too loud? Sorry. It just doesn't compute with me. I have to conclude that people who can't tolerate aquatic wildlife making a home in their pond and behaving as nature intended perhaps should...oh, I don't know...not HAVE a pond, maybe? Just a thought.

I worry about spiders, too. I know they're not actually endangered, but it breaks my heart to see them killed just because they're "scary looking." This one's a pretty common phobia, I've learned. I have friends who turn a whiter shade of pale when they even HEAR the word "spider." (You gals know who you are.) But these little guys are some of the best allies we have for getting rid of the "bad" bugs in our gardens. And their webs can be awesome pieces of artwork. Along with lady bugs and praying mantises, spiders are some of the "good guys" in our ecosystem. Try to cut them some slack if you can.

And snakes. Yeah, I know they can get in our ponds and maybe eat a few small fish, but that's part of the food chain thingie at work, right? And they also eat grasshoppers (now that's one garden critter I find absolutely NO use for – unless it's to feed the snakes). I don't know why so many people go apoplectic over snakes. I think they're pretty cool. I mean, YOU try locomoting across uneven ground without the help of arms or legs and looking graceful while you're at it. So try to cut them some slack, too.

And on behalf of insects in general, I know I've said this before, but it bears repeating: Out of every ten insects in our gardens, only one is actually destructive to the plants. So when you use insecticide to kill insects, you're killing nine good guys to get one bad guy. That is, as Mr. Spock would say, illogical at best.

Oh. For those of you who have expressed an interest, an update on the cat clones (how's that for a segue?) Paula the Cat Trap Lady (who henceforth shall be known as Saint Paula) and I managed to bag Alpha and Catsper two days ago. Alpha was amazingly easy to trap (guess he saw the writing on the wall and decided to turn himself in), but Catsper gave us a run for our money. However, we persevered, and they have now joined the ranks of The Neutered Class. Neither one of them is having anything to do with me at the moment, but I trust that will change...especially with a cold winter coming up. As we speak, I'm busily planning how I can turn the kitten garage into a warm haven for the clones. My Monkishness should come in handy while I putter about and make little heated kitty houses. It'll be a hostel for my homeless waifs. (See? I'm much calmer now that they aren't cloning themselves anymore.) Dagobah is back to being a peaceful kingdom. Now if we can just KEEP it peaceful. Only my neutered six have reservations at the Dagobah Feline Inn for the winter, all other creatures PLEASE seek accommodations elsewhere!

Okay, I think I've written enough to appease the ol' man...uh I mean The Editor. So I'm going to wind this up and go outside and check on the livestock before I go to bed. The next-door neighbors had a wild, noisy party in their backyard last night that went on ALL night, and Rocky Raccoon and the boys wisely stayed up in their trees for the duration. So they'll be hell on wheels tonight. I'd better batten down the hatches.

See you next month. Let's hope it won't be the Dog Days of September....





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