



October Meeting

Metamorphosis Garden
Westdale Elementary
2000 College Dr

October 27, 2002

The Water Spout

Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society Newsletter

October, 2002

Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society, Founded June 1993

www.capwgs.org

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Meeting Dates for 2002

Monthly Meetings

October 27, 2002

December 1, 2002 (**Christmas Party**) Keep these dates in mind and plan to attend the meetings. The Society can only get better if everyone participates, so get involved. Locations will be in the monthly Newsletter.

Tuesday Programs

November 12, 2002

September Minutes

There are no minutes for September. We did not hold a meeting in September, however we did have our workshop, which turned out to be very informative. I think everyone that attended received enough info to help out with most aspects of pond building and care.

Tuesday Night Meetings

The October meeting was on the 8th at Sandy Lux's, 6935 LaSalle Ave. At that meeting Sandy demonstrated how to build rocks for the pond. Due to a little rain it was cut short, but I think everyone that attended had a good time and learned a lot from the demonstration. We will try to do this again in the spring.

At this month's Tuesday meeting we will build an indoor winter home for your plecostomus, and demonstrate simple water quality testing techniques. If you'd like to host the meeting on November 12, please let Danna know. If you volunteer you will receive a complete water analysis of your pond.

Remember, there won't be a regular Sunday Society meeting in November because of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Our Christmas party will be on December 1.

Feature Article

Getting Ready for Winter

Here's a checklist of things to do to make sure that you and your pond are all set for the cold winter months ahead.

By Sue Speichert

Your Pond

1. Clean all the crud out of your pond. No algae. No fish waste. No leaves from trees or plants. All of this will decompose in the bottom of the pond during the winter. As it breaks down it will draw precious oxygen out of the pond water, robbing it from fish and other aquatic wildlife. Decaying organic matter is also prime ground for harmful bacteria, parasites, and protozoa to spend the winter. During a warm spell, they can quickly attack your fish before your fish's immune system is prepared to fight them off. You'll have a pond full of stinky, slimy sludge as well as sick and poorly fish. Is this the way you want to start your spring?

2. Consider whether you want to vacuum out the scum in the bottom of the pond, or whether you should drain and clean the pond instead. Generally, it's advisable to drain and clean the pond if there's more than 2 inches or so of debris in the bottom. Set up a kiddie pool with clean pond water to hold your fish and make sure to put a net over it to keep the fish from jumping out. You can use spare pond water to hold your water plants in temporary quarters, too. If you just vacuum out the pond and do a partial water change, or if you do a pond drain, clean-up and refill, make sure to add dechlorinator so your fish won't be harmed by the chlorine and heavy metals in the new tap water.

3. Clean up around the pond, too. Leaves and other plant debris that's left on the edge can make its way into the pond. Insects and other harmful organisms can overwinter in the dead vegetation and wreak havoc on your pond plants once warm weather returns.

4. If you're in an area with lots of trees, put netting over your pond to catch the leaves before they fall into your pond. Try to use the largest weave possible, so that frogs aren't suddenly left out of the pond or aren't caught in it. You can use a floating plastic ball to hold the net out of the water.

For better support, use wooden planks or plastic rods to hold the netting. Clean off fallen leaves often. It's no use to have netting if the leaves are still going to lie in the water, steeping like tea leaves.

5. Take a weekly measurement of your water quality. If it's off, you'll want to fix it now. The last thing you want is green water in the fall going into winter. The algae will die and decompose in the pond during the winter, drawing oxygen that your fish and wildlife need to survive. Come spring, you'll have a real mess on your hands.

Pumps and Filters

1. Check your pump and clean it of any debris. Clean the pre-filter, and replace it if it's worn so you'll be ready for spring. Make sure the cord and plug are in good working order, and check your tubing and hoses too. Be sure the clamps are tight and the seals are secure and waterproof. Who wants to be out fixing a leaky hose in the middle of January?

2. Check your filters and filtering system and clean them out thoroughly. You don't need to store all that gunk during the long months of winter. It's fertile ground for a whole host of pests, parasites, and bacteria that can infect and harm your fish, especially when their immune system is reduced during the winter and spring. The decaying organic material also draws up important oxygen that would otherwise be used by your fish.

3. When to close down your pond for the winter is a matter of personal preference. In areas that have ice only occasionally, there may be no need to close down the pond at all. Simply turning off the pump to any fountains or waterfalls during very cold spells will be sufficient. The filtering system can be left intact, turned off during brief periods of very cold weather, and then restarted when the warm weather returns.

Fish

1. The best way to help your fish through the winter is to make sure they're well fed and healthy during the summer. Take stock of their appearance. Make sure they're free of disease and parasites. If they're ill, take care of it now. By winter it will be too late.

2. Switch to a low-protein, high carbohydrate food when the water temperature dips below 65 F. Low-protein food is good because it's easier for them to digest. It also helps them store up the body fat that they'll use to overwinter without feeding. Feed the fish a little less every day, gradually cutting back their intake. Once the pond temperature is consistently below 50F, cease feeding them all together, regardless of how much they may appear to beg for food.

Plants

1. Trim back dead foliage and remove spent flowers. There's no reason to leave the debris to fall into the pond where it will rot for the winter.

2. Stop fertilizing plants about 3 weeks before the average frost date in your area. You want the plants to harden off for winter, which they'll do more readily once you withhold fertilizer. Even tropicals, which you're going to bring indoors, will benefit from a respite in food this time of year.

3. Take tender water plants indoors if you live in a winter-freeze climate. Before a hard freeze place tropical marginals in a warm, sunny room with their pots in a saucer of water, so that the water will wick into the soil and keep the plant moist for the winter. Tropical waterlilies will need supplement light and water that's at least 65 F for the winter, as will tender waterlily-like plants. Water hyacinth and water lettuce can be over wintered by keeping them warm (65F) and giving them supplemental light for 14 to 16 hours a day.

Remove tropical oxygenators such as anacharis, since they will simply die and decompose in the depths of the pond during the winter.

Internet Interests

www.capwgs.org

**Best Internet Site on the Web
GO THERE !!!**

<http://www.koivet.com/>

**Info on disease topics for aquatic
animals**

<http://www.pondkeeper.com/>

Pondkeeper Magazine

<http://www.watergardening.com/>

Water Gardening Magazine

<http://www.stretcher.com/stories/01/010625b.cfm>

Money Saving Tips for Ponds

******If you know of any interesting web pages that will benefit other society members, please let me know and I will post them in this section. Thanks.**

**Happy reading.
Lance Beecher
Newsletter Editor**

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