



# The Water Spout

## Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society Newsletter May, 2004

Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society, Founded June 1993

Best website on the web... [www.capwgs.org](http://www.capwgs.org) ... go there!

### May Meeting

March 23, 2003 2:30

Meeting will begin at 2:30 at the home of John & Julie Newman, 12604 Country Ridge, Baton Rouge, LA 70816, this will be a hands-on workshop on "Water Lily Potting" - Free lilies and materials provided for members!

**Note from the Editor** - It is my pleasure to serve another year as your Newsletter Editor. Thank you for entrusting me with this responsibility. I look forward to another fun-filled year and would like to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve. **-Happy reading! Bridget Hayes, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster**

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### Announcements

5th Annual Ponds for Charity Tour

June 5 - 6 10 a.m. to 5 p.m

Tickets are \$15 for a self-guided Tour

Optional Bus Tour on Saturday only (includes box lunch) Tickets are \$34

Tickets are available at both Harb's Oasis locations (Coursey Blvd. in B.R. and Hwy 42 in Prairieville) and at JimStone Co. on Florida Blvd.

For information call 225.756.2720 or 225.744.4813

## **CAPITAL AREA POND & WATER GARDENING SOCIETY MINUTES FOR APRIL, 2004**

The April meeting was held at Earth Day, Sunday, April 18, in downtown Baton Rouge.

Margaret opened the meeting by introducing our special guest, Claire Fontenot, from the Baton Rouge Botanical Garden. Claire showed us the new plans for the expansion of the Botanical Garden at Independence Park.

Plans for the next 2 meetings were announced. The May meeting will be held May 23 at 2:30 at Julie and John Newman's. This will be a Water Lily Repotting Clinic which will give everyone a chance to see how to repot your lilies the right way. Light refreshments will be served.

The June Meeting will be our Birthday Meeting. This will be a Fish Fry/Pot Luck Anniversary meeting and will be held at James Carter's home at **5:30 PM**. Please note the change in time. Bring your favorite dish to round our fish fry.

Margaret then invited all the members present to tour the many entertaining and educational Earth Day exhibits.

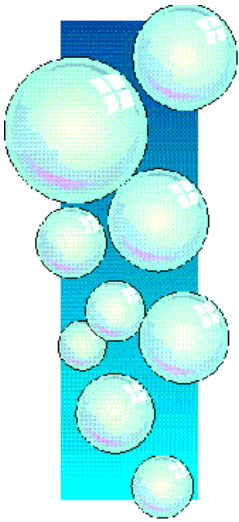
I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped us out manning the booth as well as set up and tear down. We were fortunate to have the help of many LSU students which made setting up a lot easier.

Our volunteers were: Charlotte & Tony Gray, Phyllis & John Smith, Sandi Bordelon, Shirley & Keith Baker, James Carter, Lance Beecher, Gerald Bonds, Renee Richard, Margaret Mercier, Danna Spayde and Betty Klenke.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Klenke





# The Principles of Crystal Clear Water

by Peggy Ferguson

## ***The Color of Water***

"How can I clear up my water?" We get that question every day in one form or another. The first question we ask then is "What color is your water?". Brown indicates dirt and green indicates algae. The method of clearing the water varies greatly with whether you are dealing with silt or an algae bloom.

## White Water

If your water is a white, milky color or cloudy you are probably experiencing a bacterial bloom. This is a condition that affects aquariums often, not just the pond. [AccuClear](#) is a perfect remedy for this situation. This is one of the few times we will ever advocate the use of chemicals (other than [de-chlorinator](#)) in your pond. We use a brand called AccuClear often with great results. It is important that you dose the water correctly and have plenty of aeration for the fish because the coagulation that occurs when AccuClear (or any other brand of this type) is used will take a great amount of the water's dissolved oxygen and can be hazardous to the fish.

## Brown Water

There is an easier answer to getting rid of brown water than getting rid of green. Brown indicates floating dirt and particles in the water. Rotting leaves and debris create "tanning" of the water. Perhaps your fish have been a little too active and knocked over a plant or two. Perhaps runoff from a heavy rain has dumped the neighbor's flower garden into your pond. Perhaps you've been afraid of what creatures might be lurking in the "lagoon" and procrastinated for years about giving the pond a good flushing. Either way, the *answer* is easy but *actually doing it* may not be. Put on your rubber boots and roll up your sleeves. It's finally time to tackle the monster.

**Step One - Clean the Filter.** If you have a bead system, backwash it. If you have pads, power spray them with a hose. Don't wash all the filter material with chlorinated water. Instead, take the least dirty pads and wash them with water from your pond. (This insures the life of your good bacteria).

**Step Two - Use a Water Clarifier.** Again, [AccuClear](#) can help. It binds minute particles in your water together and forces it to the bottom of the pond. Again, follow precautions and make sure that your system is highly aerated during the process. If in doubt, we have aeration equipment that you can rent for this reason.

**Step Three - Vacuum the Pond.** Now you should be able to see the bottom of the pond and all the mulm and trash you never knew existed. One of the pond's best tools is a shop vac or wet vac. Use it to vacuum the bottom and sides of the pond. Don't scrub the slime off the sides. It's beneficial to your eco-system.

## Green Water

Green water is waterborne algae and it's a bit more difficult to get rid of it than simply cleaning your pond — although cleaning the mulm and debris from your pond will increase the chances of getting rid of the algae. If you haven't experienced an algae bloom in your pond yet you're in for an enlightening experience. All bodies of water go through what we call an "algae bloom" that turns the water green (sometimes into the consistency of pea soup). It's a very natural occurrence that happens whenever the water heats up and there is enough "fuel" in the water to feed the algae.

This type of algae is a waterborne microscopic plant that reproduces like crazy and becomes so thick that it actually colors the water green. There are other types of algae that we can address like string algae and the kind that builds up on the liner. But, for now, we'll only cover the kind that turns your water green.

Mother Nature has her way of clearing the water. One day, after weeks of not being able to see your fish (much less the bottom of the pond), you may walk out and find that your pond is clear. It's almost as if little pond fairies spent all night cleaning your pond. It's actually when all the factors come together and your pond reaches its ecological balance. The following is a list of things that you can do to help the pond fairies do their job.

## Sun / Shade

If your pond is located in the sun expect shades of green that if you're Irish you can certainly be proud to have. Algae, like most plants, need sunlight to survive. Most of us can't move our pond to the shade so there are ways to simulate shade. There are products available that color your water blue. You might be able to see your fish but you see them through un-natural blue water. You can create shade for your sunny pond also by adding floating plants such as water hyacinths, water lettuce and waterlilies.

## Starve the Algae

Water plants, especially floaters and anacharis, compete with algae for nutrients in the water. The more plants you have, the more the algae starves and reproduces less. Stock up with plants. You may also consider not using fertilizer in your plants for a while until your ecological balance has been met.

## Barley Bales

We've had conflicting reports on how well barley works against algae bloom. Some folks (including our own Richard & Ann Hobbs) swear by it. They said it was a miracle. Others tell us that it didn't work for them at all while others say that it did show an improvement but nothing spectacular. One thing we are finding is that you must put barley bales where the pond water can run through it. Do not simply float it in the water. It works best if placed in the waterfall. We are now carrying [barley bales](#) if you need to purchase them.

*Update 5/19/02 -- We have had more experience with barley bales since this article was written. It is NOT really good for algae bloom (the green water) but it will work to help prevent string and blanket algae.*

## Increase Your Bios

Help Mother Nature step up the process of balancing your pond by adding bacteria to the water. There are several available on the market. ([BioSeed](#) & [MicrobLift](#)) We've found that some do not work but there are a few that we carry and believe will do you a good job.

## New Water

Water changes are a quick fix to the algae problem but only last until the water heats back up. New ponds and ponds with completely new water will undergo the process of algae bloom. In fact, it's like starting all over! If company is coming over and you're wanting crystal clear water for the evening this will work. Just remember that the cycle will start all over again the next day when the sun heats up the water.

## The Only Sure-Fire Way

There is one way to prevent you from having to go to all this trouble to get rid of green water. You can install an [ultraviolet light](#). Read on.

# UV or not UV

***That IS the question when it comes to green water.***

All the suggestions we've given so far will help fight the algae problem. The ONLY sure-fire method of destroying waterborne algae is by running the water through an [ultraviolet light](#). UV lights sterilize the algae and prevent it from reproducing. It will clear up the water and keep it clear. When installed correctly, a UV will show outstanding results within a matter of a day or two. That's the "good" side of the UV light. The "not-so-good" side is that the UV can be rather expensive. It becomes a question of personal choice and pocketbook. The more water in your pond, the more wattage you'll require thus increasing the cost of the UV.

When you've made the decision to purchase an ultraviolet light, if you don't purchase it through us, please make sure you have a reputable source that you can call and get help if needed. If the installation of the light is not right, if the water runs through at too high a volume, if the UV light is not correctly sized, you will be wasting your money! It's not difficult to add into most systems but there are a few tricks to making it perform at its best. We will be glad to help you with sizing the UV and give you the benefit of our experience with installing it.

The answer IS a UV light if you do not have the time or patience to let Mother Nature do her thing to get rid of the algae. If you're searching for a complete cure for the problem the UV is the only way to go. Otherwise you must have patience.

You can learn more about green water by reading last year's article, "[Those Low Down Green Water Blues](#)". Copies of this article are available at the store or you can access it thru our website: [www.ponddoc.com](http://www.ponddoc.com). You'll find it in the information section, [What's Up, Doc? Online](#).

*One last note:* UV lights will not get rid of string algae. String algae is not waterborne. It clings to rocks in the waterfall and on plants — basically wherever it can find a foothold. You can power-wash the string algae and let it fall to the bottom and vacuum it up or let the system take care of removing it (if your system can handle the removal) or you can pull it off with your hands. The smooth algae that collects on the sides of the pond and on the sides of plant baskets is what we consider good algae and should not be removed.

*Update 5/19/02: We have found that by using [barley bales](#) to prevent it and [AlgaeFix](#) to kill off what's there you can get string and blanket algae under control.*



Until now it has never been cost effective to place a powerful UV light on a smaller system of less than 500 gallons. The small pond owner was forced to suffer with algae bloom for lack of the right UV. Now there's a UV especially designed for ponds 500 gallons and less at an affordable price. We've tested it and given it 2 fins up! To find out more information about this affordable UV [go to our UV page](#), call us at (770) 663-6325 or [email](#) us.

From The Clear Water Edition of *What's Up, Doc?*, May, 1999

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