



The Water Spout

Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society Newsletter September, 2004

Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society, Founded June 1993

Best website on the web... www.capwgs.org ... go there!

July Meeting

September 26, 2004

Sunday September 26, 2004: 5:30 PM Members-Only Pond Tour and Pot-Luck Progressive Supper
Three pond tour locations needed for Salad/Entrée/Dessert Pot-Luck Progressive Supper

You will be receiving the details in the mail or by email. Please contact one of the officers listed at the bottom of this page if do not receive you info. Hope to see you there!

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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CAPITAL AREA POND & WATER GARDENING SOCIETY

Minutes for August, 2004 Meeting

The August meeting was held Sunday, August 22, at the Bluebonnet Swamp. Margaret opened the meeting by welcoming all who attended and introduced Lance Beecher, who gave us a talk about Water Quality in our Ponds.

Seventeen members attended the meeting. They were Mary Beth Guidry, Danna Spayde, Charles Wagner, Jerry & Rita Satawa, James & Phyliss Smith, Lance Beecher, James Carter, Roger & Kathie Dietrich, Buzz & Alice Werline, Tony & Charlotte Gray, Betty Klenke, Margaret Mercier and our guest Kayleigh Beecher, Lance's able assistant.

Margaret spoke about the Baton Rouge House Beautiful Show on August 28 & 29 at the Centroplex. We have been offered a booth to promote the pond society. Volunteers are needed to help Margaret and Danna out in this booth.

Danna brought us up to date on acquiring the 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. Our application is still pending because the IRS wants more information. Danna will be working on submitting this information as soon as possible. It is not uncommon for the IRS to ask for lots of additional information two or three times before approval is granted. We have an extension till Sept. 6 and will ask for another one if we can't get it done by then.

We are waiting for equipment to come in to complete the Mosquito Abatement project. Margaret will take samples of stone to be used on this pond to the Mosquito Abatement staff for approval.

Our Members-Only Pond Tour is scheduled for September 26. This will be a progressive dinner with food furnished by the Society. You will be receiving more information on the details shortly. So mark your calendar – this will be a fun event.

A Swamp Tour is planned for October 23 – more details on this later.

Lance Beecher gave a talk on water quality and how to handle different problems involved with our ponds.

He mentioned he has received a number of calls from people complaining of fish dying even though they were not sick and water tested fine. He said low oxygen is probably the cause because of the heat and not enough circulation. If your fish are not coming to the top to feed or are staying close to the waterfall this could be a sign of a low oxygen level. He suggested adding an additional pump to add additional circulation of water during the stressful days of summer. Also be sure to run pumps 24 hours a day.

Lance suggested keeping a box of ice cream salt on hand for killing parasites and algae. If fish look like they are dying the salt may be a good remedy also. The salt is also good to use after cleaning your pond.

New test kits are available from Tetra which use a dip stick to test water. They can be purchased from Foster & Smith Catalog or aquarium shops or online. They test hardness, PH and alkalinity. Another good idea is to add a box of baking soda every now and then.

AlgaeFix is still a remedy for string algae. Some people have good luck with barley straw. A UV light will eliminate suspended algae.

More information is available in books, the Internet and other Pond Societies.

The meeting was adjourned and members went outside to view the pond installed by the Society.

Respecfully Submitted,

Betty Klenke



The Ins and Outs on creating a Dry Creek Garden... Try It!

Northern California homeowners Steve and Joanie Wynn have a small brick patio in their backyard, but the view is of an ugly, overgrown hillside. The perfect solution, landscape designer Jamie McMurray says, is to install a meandering dry creek bed, with meadow plantings on the banks and a container water garden at the base to lend the sound of a babbling brook. The Wynns love the idea; it will give them a place to read and relax while listening to the soothing sound of water.



Landscape Smart host Ken Bastida (left) discusses design ideas with homeowners Steve and Joanie Wynn (right) and landscaping expert Jamie McMurray. Within three days the Wynns will look out onto their own private "creek," complete with the sound of running water.

McMurray explains that it's important to design the creek bed so that it winds and curves, just as brooks do in nature. Also, he advises using rocks of varying sizes to form the bed, and carefully hiding the beginning of the creek so that it curves out from behind a tree or a group of plantings. The total cost of this project would be \$3,500 if done professionally, says McMurray; with the help of the homeowners, the cost can be pared to \$750, and that includes plants, rocks and boulders, and supplies for the water garden. In terms of difficulty, the project is rated a 5 on a scale of 1 to 5. "We're talking about two tons of rocks and boulders," says McMurray. He recommends bringing in help to haul and place the large stones for the creek bed.

- Use the dirt removed from the trench to build up the sides of the creek, forming banks.
- Lay down a strip of weed cloth to prevent plants and weeds from emerging in the trench (**figure B**). Use special staples to hold the cloth in place.
- Cover the weed cloth with a layer of sand to form a solid base for the rocks



Figure B

Step Two: Laying the Stones

Now it's time to lay the rocks and stones that will form the dry creek bed. Use a variety of sizes, and try to place them in a way that imitates nature; that is, put larger, heavier stones on the sides of the creek bed (**figure C**), and place smaller stones so that they "flow" down the middle of the creek.

Avoid organizing the rocks in any pattern, and when you reach the lower end of the dry creek bed, spread fine, gold-colored decomposed granite (**figure D**) to create the look of natural sediments



Figure C

Planting Plan

With the rocks in place, it's time to fill in the meadow. Again, the idea is to create a natural look (McMurray calls it "planned wildness"). In California that would mean using plants that are native and drought-tolerant. Here is McMurray's strategy:

- Keep the design simple; repeat colors, forms and textures within the given area.
- Make sure both sides of the creek bed are balanced.
- Create focal points by placing a few unusual plants, such as large ornamental grasses, at the top and bottom of the bed.
- Choose a color palette: warm colors (oranges, reds, yellows) are lively and can make a large area feel intimate; cool colors (blues, purples, greens) are relaxing and create the illusion of depth.
- McMurray's plant choices for the Wynns' new meadow include verbena (*Verbena bonariensis*), miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis*), Mexican primrose (*Oenothera berlandieri*), yarrow (*Achillea x taygetea*) and black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*).



Low-maintenance verbena (*Verbena bonariensis*) is hardy in Zones 7-11, blooms summer through fall and reseeds freely.



Miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis*) is an ornamental grass that will create good focal points in the meadow garden. Long-blooming Mexican primrose (*Oenothera berlandieri*) has a spreading habit and might need to be trimmed back periodically.

Internet Interests...

Best Website on the web. GO THERE!
Capital Area Pond & Water Gardening Society
<http://www.capwgs.org/>

Here are a few of our members favorites...

- Pond keeper Magazine <http://www.pondkeeper.com>
- Water Gardening Magazine Info on disease topics for aquatic animals <http://www.koivet.com>
- National Pond Society <http://www.bandd.net/nps/index.htm>
- Austin Pond Society <http://www.austinpondsociety.org/>
- Stokes Tropicals in New Iberia <http://www.stokestropicals.com/>
- Rare and Exotic Seeds <http://www.seedman.com>
- Big Cat Sanctuary <http://www.yogieandfriends.org>
- Miami Valley Water Garden Society Web Page <http://www.mvwgs.org>
- Pond Pals Tour <http://members.aol.com/marylady/pondpals/pindex.htm>
- Water Gardening Magazine <http://www.watergardening.com>
- Master Garden Products <http://www.mastergardenproducts.com/watergar.htm>
- <http://www.ponddoc.com/>
- www.gardenlink.com
- St. Joseph Water Garden Society: www.sjwatergarden.com

Go to the CAPWGS website for more favorites. If you have a favorite that will benefit other society members, please let us know. Thanks!

To purchase a business card ad space, contact Bridget Hayes 225-275-4698 or lilypads@capwgs.org



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