



The Water Spout

Deep South Koi and Pond Society Newsletter August, 2005

Deep South Koi and Pond Society, Founded June 1993

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AUGUST MEETING

You are cordially invited to the August meeting of the Deep South Koi and Pond Society.

Who: Deep South Koi and Pond Society Members

Date: August 28, 2005

Time: 2:30 PM

Place: Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center

Activity: Dog Days of Summer Make-It and Take-It Social

Come make a tabletop fountain to cool your home during the dog days of summer!

All materials provided by the society.

OFFICERS

President: Margaret Mercier
(225) 751-2293 (h) (225) 266-3590 (cell)
(800) 878-4848 (fax)
mmercier@louisiana.com

Secretary: Sandi Bordelon
(225) 774-9342

Vice-President: James Carter
(225) 664-3487 (h & w)
No email

Treasurer: Lance Beecher
(225) 769-0253 (h)
lancebeecher@bellsouth.net

Deep South Koi and Pond Society
Minutes of Meeting – July 24, 2005

Meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. at Bluebonnet Swamp by President Margaret Mercier with the following members present.

Margaret Mercier, President	Beulah Bolton	Rodney & Pat Adams
Jimmie & Rose Marie Powell	Danna Spayde	Madison Cashio
Charles Wagner	Alethea & Emily O'Quinn	David Taylor
James Carter	Sam & Happy Harris	Lance Beecher

We also welcomed three visitors: Kathy Robinson and her daughters Annalise Pullings and Jordan Hallman We hope they enjoyed the meeting and will join us in the future.

Cold drinks were provided and distributed. In the absence of the Secretary the minutes of the June meeting were not discussed.

Margaret announced that at this time there is no program for the August meeting. She is trying to contact a friend to talk to us about Wetlands. Everyone agreed that this would be a good topic, and there were no other suggestions.

Margaret also suggested that a portion of today's and future meetings be devoted to members' talking about their ponds and what they are doing to cope with current weather and environmental situations. This information will be put in the newsletter.

She announced that BREC is finally buying the equipment that we have been requesting for the Botanic Garden pond. It should arrive next week, and their workers will install it. However, they will need some advice on needed plumbing supplies and some supervision from us to get it in. Norris Pitre, a long time BREC employee has offered to work with us on this project on a weekend. Any Society members who want to volunteer to help are welcome. The tentative date is three Sundays from now, or August 14.

Treasurer Lance Beecher reported that our current bank balance is \$2,450.21. Gross income from our fund raiser at the LSU Horticulture Show and Earth Day was \$482. Expenses were \$20 for printing tickets, giving us a net of \$460. The money got mixed together so he couldn't tell how much we made on the sale of fish. We made \$7 on plant sales. The other was raffle tickets for the glider. Margaret thanked James Carter again for the donation of the glider and fish and for his help at both events.

Everyone who was present had received their newsletter ok.

Danna Spayde, a long time orchid hobbyist, presented a program on orchids. She brought some of her blooming plants to illustrate the talk.

Program Summary:

Orchids are perennial plants and, just like any other type of perennial, will respond and bloom if their needs are met. They are not the fragile, delicate plants that people assume them to be because of their exotic flowers. They are tough plants that thrive on benign neglect and grow everywhere on the planet except Antarctica.

Orchids are also very sexy plants, using many unusual methods to attract pollinators. In fact, the word orchid derives from the Greek word *orchis* which means “testicle”. (the one fact people remember from her talks on orchids!) Many orchids also have wonderful fragrances, and at many orchid shows there is judging on fragrance.

Opportunities for learning more about orchids in Baton Rouge are the BR Orchid Society, which has a monthly meeting called Green Growers for those new to the hobby; Orchids for Seniors which Danna leads for BREC; and a two week short course that Danna teaches for the LSU Union Leisure Program each semester.

She related orchid care to the four ancient “elements”: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water.

Earth: Most orchids are epiphytes, growing on tree limbs for support only and not taking any nourishment from the host plants, so they do **not** require earth. They grow in very loose, free draining potting media, such as bark, charcoal/Sponge-Rok (a type of chunky perlite), coconut husks, etc. They can be potted in clay or plastic pots, wooden or plastic baskets, or mounted on wood, cork, or tree fern fiber. Many will thrive with no medium at all – just hanging from a wire or anchored in an empty basket.

There are, however, terrestrial orchids that grow in the ground. One that will grow in Baton Rouge is *Bletilla striata*, aka Chinese Hardy Orchid, or Ground Orchid. Rhizomes of these are usually available in the spring when the nurseries put out their big displays of bulbs. After a few years, they make a nice clump with little orchid flowers in early spring.

Air: Epiphytic orchids grow in the tops of trees where there is always air movement. They do not like stagnant air and should be provided with good air movement, whether grown indoors or in a greenhouse. In the summer they can be placed outside where they will get good air movement.

Fire: This element has to do with temperature. Only tropical, warm growing orchids will grow in the Baton Rouge area, and they must be protected from freezing. The ones that do well here usually prefer temperatures no lower than 50° to 55°. Fortunately, we can grow them outdoors for about nine months of the year. In winter a brief period below the 50° level will not kill them, but it must not be prolonged.

Water: This is the trickiest part of orchid care, as people tend to kill them by over watering. Frequency of watering depends on the type of potting medium used, the ambient temperature, and frequency of rain (for plants outdoors). In the kind of heat we’ve had lately, they can be watered nearly every day, if it doesn’t rain, in the medium Danna uses. Orchids also like high humidity levels, definitely not a problem in Baton Rouge. Watering is trickiest in winter. They shouldn’t be watered when it’s real cold or if the water is cold. However, many are semi-dormant in winter and can go as long as three weeks to a month without any water at all. If watered weekly during the growing period, they can be fertilized with each watering with a weak fertilizer solution. Time release fertilizers can also be used.

An important element in getting them to bloom is light. Most require bright, indirect light and do well hanging from tree limbs or fences that get partial shade. Take care moving them outside in the spring as the leaves can burn and will be unsightly for a long time.

Orchids can be grown in trees that are near ponds and would be a nice addition to the pondscape. They could also be dipped into the pond if not planted in a medium that would wash out into the pond. The fish detritus would be good fertilizer for them.

Danna will be happy to have members contact her with orchid questions and problems and invited everyone to Orchid Society meetings, where visitors are welcome.

After the program Margaret asked everyone to share experiences with their ponds in this very hot weather we’re having. Below are the responses:

Rod & Patricia Adams take some of the gravel and lots of vegetation out so their fish can swim.

Sam & Happy Harris do frequent water changes and buy new fish!

Margaret Mercier has a natural bottom pond and gets lots of algae which depletes oxygen in the pond, resulting in stressed out fish, that come to the surface to gasp for air. She adds aeration. Frequent rain helps keep the surface aerated.

Madison Cashio & Danna Spayde take out excess vegetation.

James Carter hasn't done anything special. His water lilies are huge. Margaret suggested that he do a talk about water lilies sometime.

Alethea & Emily O'Quinn have a problem with lotus leaves frying in the sun and wondered if planting them deeper would help prevent this. Consensus was that they have a type that requires more shade than most, and they should move them to a shadier location.

Jimmie Powell mentioned that Naylor's Hardware and Garden Center has a good string algae control product, called Algae Fix, that will clear the algae in three days. It's done a good job for him.

Lance Beecher has tried various types of things to get rid of algae. He likes rock salt and has used Algae Fix with some success. However, he called the manufacturer, and they asked if he had gotten rid of the algae before applying it! He pressure washed a pond and then treated it with Algae Fix, and it works fine. Instead of killing the algae outright, what it does is inhibit it from attaching to things in the pond. He also recommends plecostomus, a type of tropical cat fish that eats algae. He advised against the copper stuff that turns the water blue.

Lance also told us about his new baby – a little girl, Caroline Elizabeth, who is now five weeks old. She sleeps well and is very different from Kaylie when she was a baby.

Under new business, Danna mentioned that with our new name, we need a new logo and shirts. This is something we will have to work on. Margaret explained that the reason for the name change is to be more regional and develop a presence in the koi world.

Before leaving, members inspected the pond that the Society installed for Bluebonnet Swamp a couple of years ago. Everything was working well, and the pond looked good. It was needed so that animals in the Swamp would have access to water when there is a dry spell and the pond dries up.

Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danna Spayde
Substituting for Secretary

Build a Rain Garden



Storm water runoff can be a big problem in summer during heavy thunderstorms. As the water rushes across roofs and driveways, it picks up oil and other pollutants. Municipal storm water treatment plants often can't handle the deluge of water, and in many locations the untreated water ends up in natural waterways. The EPA estimates as much as 70 percent of the pollution in our streams, rivers, and lakes is carried there by storm water.

To reduce the excess water runoff, many towns are encouraging businesses and homeowners to install rain gardens in their yards. Rain gardens are specially constructed gardens located in low areas of a yard where storm water can collect. The idea is to have the water naturally funnel to this garden. The rain garden collects water runoff and stores and filters it until it can be slowly absorbed by the soil.

The garden's size and location depends on the yard. The ideal situation would be to locate the garden in a natural depression. You also can funnel water from downspouts on gutters into the garden. The soil should be well drained so the water doesn't sit in the garden for more than two days. A special "rain garden" soil mix of 50 to 60 percent sand, 20 to 30 percent topsoil, and 20 to 30 percent compost is recommended. You can dig this mixture into the soil to depth of 2 feet before planting.

The most difficult part of building a rain garden can be plant selection. Plants need to be tough enough to withstand periodic flooding, yet attractive enough to look good in the garden. Deep-rooted, low-care native plants, such as asters, and tough non-natives, such as daylilies, are best. If properly designed, the rain garden can consist of a blend of attractive shrubs, perennials, trees, and ground covers. Planting strips of grass around the garden and using mulch also can help filter the water.

For more information on creating a rain garden and for sample garden designs, go to: [Rain Gardens of Western Michigan](#).

Reprinted from the NGA Newsletter – a bi-weekly guide to gardening in your region. To receive this newsletter go to NGA@nationalgardening.com

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!

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Note from the Editor: I look forward to serving as your Newsletter editor for this year. Your ideas or any information you would like to add to the newsletter are always welcome. Please contact me at 225 755 2449 or email me at betty@lakeshoregroup.com.