

This Year:
CWGS at 25
Our Silver Anniversary

Sunday, Mar. 9: Program on Container Gardening. 1:30 to 3:30, Gates Hall in Denver Botanic Gardens.

Apr. 9: Get Wet 2008
7:00 to 9:00, Gates Hall

May 18: Plant Swap
1:30 to 3:30, Gates Hall

June 8: Annual Plant Sale
9:00 to 3:00, Morrison Ctr.

June 22: Waterside Program
2:00, Site to be determined

July 12: Pond Tour/Picnic
11:00 to 4:00 Picnic at 5:00

July 26 and 27: Water Blossom Festival and 25th Anniversary Festivities, DBG.

Aug. 17: Waterside Program
2:00, Site to be determined

Sep. 14: Annual Mtg. And Board Elections
1:30 to 3:30, Gates Hall

Dec. 7: Holiday Banquet
6:00 – 9:00 Morrison Ctr.



Volume 25 Number 1

25th Anniversary Year

March 2008

About This Year...

Letter from CWGS President Vicki Aber

CWGS is off to a great start in 2008! It may not seem like much is happening because our first meeting isn't until March 9th but the Board has been super-busy planning the year that marks our Silver Anniversary.

Our March meeting will be about container gardens, a subject with universal interest. Containers appeal equally to gardeners with lots of yard and also to apartment dwellers with a balcony. (After all, there is always room for one more container!)

Many aquatic plants do well in containers. I'm excited to get some pointers from an expert. Denver Botanic Gardens' Curator Joe Tomocik has spent many years developing container gardens. His article on the evolution of his technique follows on page 5 of this issue. Joe will share his knowledge March 9.

In April we hold our annual Get Wet event. It will be an evening of fun speakers and interaction with folks from local garden centers. Radio personality Keith Funk will join us once again. I understand Keith will be focusing on "green" (environmentally friendly) products for our gardens. Look for some very special door prizes. See the article on page 8 for more detail.

In May we'll have our Plant Swap, so be thinking

of all those extras that you can trade for something you don't have. Last year we had lots of great stuff.

Our annual Plant Sale returns in June to the Morrison Center. Check out magazines and catalogs, and make your wish list now. If you share your list with the Plant Sale committee (Vicki Aber, Janet Bathhurst, April Hough), we will try to make your wish come true!

**Program - Sunday, March 9 at 1:30 PM
Gates Hall, Denver Botanic Gardens**

**"Little things
can be monumental"**

DBG Curator Joe Tomocik shares his years of experience planting container water gardens. See articles on page 5

Remember, the plant sale is a win-win situation. You get the plants you've been dreaming of and maybe some plants you didn't know you wanted 'til you got there. And, you help support the club!

The Annual Pond Tour and Picnic (July) may take a slightly different form this year. Chairs Gary Blubaugh (303) 989-4464 and Jonathan Hough (303) 499-6578 are considering an open venue in which any and all members can show their ponds.

(continued on page 4)

Visit us online at www.colowatergardensociety.org

President Vicki Aber	303.423.9216	Newsletter Editor Bill Powell	303.355.8098
Vice President Jim Arneill	303.843.9619	Newsletter Assembly Gary and Joyce Blubaugh	303.989.4464
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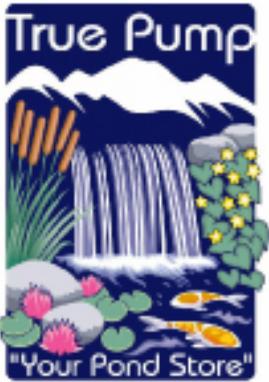
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When you have a water gardening need, please remember the merchants who support CWGS.

Express Membership Application

Membership Fees: \$15.00 Individual; \$20.00 Family
Join or Renew Today!

Make checks payable to Colorado Water Garden Society;
DO NOT send cash; Check or Money Order only, please. Thank you.
Return this form with your payment to:

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100 Glencoe St.
Denver, CO 80220

(Please Print)

Name(s) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____

E-Mail * _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Pond Experience (Beginner) _____ (Some Skill) _____ (Pro) _____

* Note: Providing your e-mail address authorizes and enables CWGS to send you notifications of interest from time to time. CWGS does not share e-mail addresses with other entities.

Contact me concerning volunteer opportunities I have checked below:

DBG Volunteer Sundays _____ Water Plants booth, DBG May Sale _____

Hudson Gardens _____ Newsletter _____ CWGS Plant Sale (June) _____ Pond Tour (July) _____

Water Blossom / Anniversary Festival (July) _____ Holiday Party (Dec.) _____

Or...Did you know?

You can now pay your dues online at www.colowatergardensociety.org

using **PayPal**

Celebrating Silver

By Charles B. Thomas
Editor, WGI ONLINE



Charles,
pondside

In 1983 John and Mary Mirgon, encouraged by Joe Tomocik, led others to form the Colorado Water Garden Society, the first such society ever. This year CWGS celebrates its Silver anniversary. Though John Mirgon passed away in 2005, Mary Mirgon is an active WGI member, and Joe Tomocik, Curator of Water Gardens at Denver Botanic Gardens, is a regular WGI Online columnist.

Do you remember water gardening 25 years ago?

Few US retailers offered water garden products. When found, the offerings were generally scant. Magazines rarely published water garden information. Occasionally a publisher released a water garden book. Too often botanic gardens relegated aquatic collections to a low priority status. It was not easy to find anyone who could discuss waterlilies. Water garden clubs did not exist. No organization focused on waterlily identification.

Today countless nurseries and garden centers offer a wide assortment of aquatic plants. Garden magazines regularly feature water garden articles. New waterlily books appear every year. Botanic gardens vie to outdo each other with properly identified aquatic displays. Nowadays you can easily find someone who enjoys discussing waterlilies. WGI lists 136 clubs in eight countries. Many of them offer helpful web sites.

CWGS, a founding member of WGI, blazed the

way for all who follow. Always a leader in innovative ways for a club to serve its members and its community, it has an incomparable partnership with Denver Botanic Gardens.

Current CWGS President Vicki Aber tells us that the Water Blossom Festival, July 26 and 27, 2008, is to be the highlight of their Silver anniversary celebration. Look for coverage here!

What a difference 25 years makes! Our congratulations to CWGS on this milestone.

Note: This article was originally published in Volume 3, issue Number 1, February 2008 issue of WGI ONLINE. Reprinted with the permission of the author and WGI.

About WGI...

"Water Gardeners International, founded January 2006, promotes water gardening throughout the world. It serves and represents water gardeners everywhere with inclusive interactive communication and education. Leading scientists, horticulturists, historians, and veteran water gardeners share cutting-edge knowledge."

"WGI provides the central location for water gardeners seeking information on botanic and public gardens, clubs and societies, research, relevant publications, and the most extensive library of water gardening articles and images on the Internet."

Charles Thomas is the Editor-In-Chief of WGI's online Journal. Kitt Knotts is the Volunteer Executive Director. WGI's website reports 1,611 Members from 68 countries on six continents. To access the journal and become a member for free and "without any strings attached" log onto the website @ www.watergardenersinternational.org

CWGS is a founding member of WGI.

About This Year...

(continued from front page)

The Pond Tour Committee's ideas are still in development, but if you're interested in showing your water garden, be sure to let Gary or Jonathan know.

This season we're planning to hold a couple meetings at people's homes. We haven't identified which homes, yet. If you would like to host a meeting pond-side at your place in June or August, let me know. You only have to provide the site; you don't need to plan the program or provide refreshments. We'll do all the work. You can just lie back and drink in the admiration. For more detail, read the article on Waterside Programs on page 7 of this issue.

Of course the most important event this year will be the Water Blossom Festival on July 26th and 27th. This will be an event of mammoth proportions! Nationally-renown water gardener Charles Thomas will be the keynote speaker. The two-day event will also include breakout sessions on topics of interest, hands-on demonstrations, and tours to local gardens. Be sure to save the date because you won't want to miss this.

Sadly, we are losing a member of the Board of Directors. Gail Goldberg is moving out of state. We wish her the best in her new job and the move. Gail's departure leaves an additional opening on the Board this year. If anyone is interested in filling one of the open slots, please let any member of the Board know. It means a few meetings, but we really do have a good time and we don't bite. Don't make me call and beg!

Please remember, too, that members are always welcome to attend the Board business meetings. This year's schedule is posted on page 8 of this newsletter. If possible, let someone on the Board know you plan to join us. Occasionally meeting times and locations have to be adjusted on short notice, and we want all interested Members to attend.

Whew, that IS a lot! Hopefully, there is something for everyone. Here's dreaming of warmer days.

Vicki Aber
 CWGS Board President

New and Renewing Members:

Dennis Albrecht
 Aurora, CO

Betsy Fallin
 Littleton, CO

Wanda Grell
 Parker, CO

Recole and Shane Hastings
 Aurora, CO 80016
 (new members – Welcome, Recole & Shane!)

Tom and Ann Herbst
 Aurora, CO

Charles Hunt
 Denver, CO

Lynn Novitsky
 Littleton, CO

YOU CHOOSE 2008
Plant Primary

In keeping with the election year we thought we'd hold an election of favorite plants. To nominate your favorite plants in the following categories, just tear out this form and mail it to:

Vicki Aber
 8046 Parfet Way
 Arvada, CO 80005

If you really can't decide, you may nominate more than one per category. We'll have an 'election' later this year once we have the nominees in.

Favorite Hardy Lily _____

Favorite Tropical Lily _____

Favorite Hardy Marginal plant _____

Favorite Tropical Marginal plant _____

Favorite plant that you would like to have, but don't _____

Nominate now; don't leave your favorite plant high and dry. Let's see what a versatile group of plants we can assemble for the election. (Who knows, if you reveal a plant you'd really like, but don't yet have, maybe another Member will share a piece with you?)

Regional Get-Togethers... ...What do you think?

In reading through our CWGS newsletters over the past year, Nancy and I have noticed the names of new and returning members, some from our own community of Boulder, whom we have not had the opportunity to meet at various society meetings and work sessions.

Although we all have a common interest in water gardens, we are also all very busy so it's understandable that not all folks have gotten to know one another - especially the newer members. Some of us also live quite far from central Denver.

Wouldn't it be fun and useful to have some regional (e.g., northern or southern counties) informal get-togethers (all CWGS members or interested people welcome) just to talk about our current projects, successes, and problems?

Sunday afternoon get-togethers for coffee or a cool drink and pond talk would work. If you like the idea, or you'd be willing to host a regional get-together, or you can think of alternative formats and times, please contact any Board member. (Board Contact information is listed on page 2 of this newsletter.)

By Werner Neupert, CWGS Member

Free... to a good home!

**Ten black plastic half barrels
30" X 23" X 11 to 16" deep.**

**Donated by moving club member.
Call Jim at (303) 843-9619, if interested.**

Treasurer's Report

CWGS Balance
As of the end of January
\$ 17,970.97

Board Business Meetings in 2008:

March 9: 12:00 PM - Gates Hall, DBG
April 6: 2:00 PM - Waring House, DBG
May 18: 12:00 PM - Gates Hall, DBG
July 20: 2:00 PM - Waring House, DBG
Sept. 14: 12:00 PM - Gates Hall, DBG
Oct. 5: 2:30 PM - Waring House, DBG

All members are welcome. Please join us!

Get Wet Goes Green

How can you make your pond even better this year? Mark your calendar to attend **"Get Wet - Gardening Fun in 2008!"** at Gates Hall in Denver Botanic Gardens on April 9. Admission to the Gardens and the program is free!

Representatives from major garden centers will kick off the evening at 6:30 PM with displays and information about locally available water gardening resources. At 7:00 KEZW's "Garden Wise Guy" Keith Funk headlines a program that examines the multiple meanings of "green" gardening.

From 8:30 to 9:00, take part in hands-on demonstrations ranging from digital photography to planting and division of water plants.

Still have some unanswered questions? Visit the "Ask the Experts" table, and maybe collect a door prize, as well! The evening promises to be one of fun, education, and humor.

More details in next month's newsletter.

Evolution of a Container Water Gardener

By Joseph V. Tomocik,
Curator, DBG Water Gardens



"Rocky Mountain Legacy"
N. Cynthia Ann (shown right) is
excellent for use in container gardens

I started with three half-barrels that I displayed at the south end of the Monet Garden pool for many years. I was in love with those half-barrels, and I used my favorite plants ceremoniously.

My waterlily selections were the hardy *Nymphaea* 'Laydekeri Rosea' (hybridizer: Latour Marliac) and the small, powder-blue, viviparous, tropical *N.* 'Daubenyana'. The dwarf cattail (*Typha minima*) worked well and duckweed (*Lemna minor*) was a lot of fun.

I marveled at these little gems and the Gardens' visitors loved them as well. I was so enthralled that I eventually purchased twenty-four whisky barrels from Ace Hardware, bringing them to my backyard and doing my own research.

After a number of years I moved on to something else - plastic containers. I soon forgot about the half-barrels as the plastic containers offered longevity; they did not fall apart after winter storage.

I began to experiment with different plants and techniques. Favorite plants expanded to taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), umbrella plant (*Cyperus alternifolius*) and aquatic mint - all different forms, sizes and colors.

Later, I worked a bit more loosely. I was now using more plants and creating fuller displays.

Aquatics with non-floating leaves (marginals) could be planted directly into soil and did not have to be submerged. Maintenance was easier and many more plants could be used.

By now we were using glazed containers of various sizes, colors, and shapes. The numbers increased dramatically, peaking in 2003 when a record breaking eighty-one aquatic container gardens (proudly dubbed "Project 81") graced Denver Botanic Gardens.

Finally, let me note that my container water gardening evolution would never have come to be without the encouragement and help of so many CWGS volunteers!

**"Little things...
can be monumental"**

**Sunday, March 9 at 1:30 PM
Gates Hall, Denver Botanic Gardens
Container Water Gardens**

The program will cover the basics of container water gardening, but also some tricks of the trade. DBG Water Gardens Curator Joe Tomocik will discuss recommended plant species, container types, planning and planting strategies, techniques, and maybe a few hints that will surprise.

"Sometimes," Joe says, "the secret lies in little (miniscule, seemingly unimportant) things!" Joe should know. He's perfected the art of container water gardening through years of trial and error. Read about Joe's experience in the accompanying article. (Left, this page)

Green Water In Spring?... ...Winter white may contribute



CWGS Members Gary and Joyce Blubaugh's stream in winter.

Photo by Gary Blubaugh

By Bill Powell

Gazing at our icy ponds, green water may be the last worry to cross our minds. I know I've been preoccupied just keeping a "breathing" hole open through the ice during the cold we've experienced this winter.

However, snow pack on ponds (aside from speeding surface freezing) also contributes to the nitrogen and phosphate load present in water. Both nitrogen and phosphate are nutrient rich. Both are present in solid naturally-occurring and man-made fertilizers. And both, under certain conditions, can also be "fixed" from the atmosphere and deposited on your lawn and in your pond.

Have you noticed in spring how your lawn seems to "perk up" just after a snow? Although the grass is partially revived by the moisture, moisture is not the only source of the plant's lift. It's being fed by atmospheric-borne nutrients. This same mildly nutrient solution is also falling into your water feature.

Of course aquatic nutrient problems mostly originate from other sources - from lawn

fertilizers, uneaten fish food, and most frequently from decomposing vegetation and fish mulm. Good pond-keeping practices help to minimize these sources. Removing fallen tree leaves, cutting-back dead pond vegetation, and controlling the number of fish helps to limit nutrients and control algae, but even well maintained ponds can green-over excessively in spring.

In many ways algae is beneficial. Algae consume excess nitrates that are generated when ammonia compounds, the bi-product of decaying organic matter, are converted by complex pond chemistry first into nitrites and then into nitrates.

However, until the natural cycle gets going in spring and a seasonal balance is established, excess nitrates can result in sudden booms of algae. In early spring most ponds are particularly vulnerable. Increased sunlight, rising water temperatures, and a deficit of shade exacerbate algae growth. Sudden explosions can be unsightly; occasionally they can overwhelm the pond's ecological balance and pose greater problems if the water becomes laden with algae – the dreaded "pea soup."

Nutrient deposition from snow, while it's proportionally less important than other common sources, certainly can't help but increase the load that pond chemistry must bring to balance, so it seems likely that snow load can't be helpful to the pond keeper and may tip the balance in favor of excessive algae bloom.

Atmospheric studies have been following the effects of Rocky Mountain wet nutrient deposition for many years. The studies record an increase in the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen. The increase is attributed to growing use of fossil fuels.

Waterside Programs

We think, for a variety of reasons, a number of Member ponds escape attention. Maybe you're busy when the Annual Pond Tour rolls around, or you're off the beaten path, or maybe your feature is something other than a conventional pond and you're not sure how it would fit on a tour. This year we hope to show-off these hidden treasures through a new "Waterside Program."

Twice this summer in June and August the Society will host programs held waterside, adjacent to Member's water features. Program topics will be suggested by the nature of your garden and will be as varied and unique as our Members' installations. You need only supply the location. We'll take care of the rest. You won't have to give a talk, supply refreshments, or coordinate logistics.

Depending upon the characteristics of your feature, the Club will find someone to give a program that coordinates with your interest in water gardening. We'll provide signage, tents, refreshments, maybe even conduct a pot-luck if you're up for it.

Your feature need not be large or elaborate. Small and quirky is encouraged! Please consider allowing the Society to tell the story of your water gardening experience, whether it's grand or intimate.

Two tentative dates and times have been selected for the Waterside Programs: June 22 and Aug 17, both at 2:00 PM.

For more information or to participate, call Vicki Aber (303) 423-9126.

Plant studies at high altitude in Rocky Mountain National Park indicate significant shifts in aquatic species there, resulting from this deposition. The practical effect on bodies of water at our lower altitudes is less certain (probably because our systems are less pristine and are also compromised by other sources).

Unfortunately, I fear I'm now about to conduct my own Denver study: For some years, in addition to usual fall maintenance, I've covered my pond with Plexiglas. I did this mostly to enhance passive solar heating of the water during winter. I gave no thought to possible benefits from keeping snow-borne nutrients from the pond. However, I've noticed that I've not experienced the extreme spring "green water" problems that befell others. That may be about to change.

This past fall a third of my cover failed, and my pond has now received a good deal of snow for the first time in its seven-year life. It will be interesting to see if this spring I join the pea soup crowd.

For more information on nitrogen deposition at high altitudes, visit www.cdph.state.co.us/ap/RNMP

Volunteer Sundays Return to DBG

Each year CWGS facilitates a minimum of ten "Volunteer Sunday" work sessions at Denver Botanic Gardens. Dedicated water gardeners appear spring and fall to assist in the preparation and maintenance of the Garden's extensive water features.

Spring volunteer sessions will resume in late March or Early April. There's no better way to learn. It's fun, and you have the satisfaction of helping to bring the Garden's water to life. Join us. Experienced and novices are equally welcome.

For more details, or to sign up, call Bill Powell (303) 355-8098.